

Male migration and problems face by the family left behind: A case study of Thesil Daska

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Abstract

Migration can bring financial prosperity but it causes the absence of traditional and cultural figure from family, which ultimately brings a change in the lives of left behinds, the wives and children. This research aims to explore the economic, social and psychological perspectives of an effected family. Qualitative nature of inquiry has been used. Study found that migrant's children enjoy greater opportunities of education and health. Migration have positive relationship with budget allocation for educational and health requirements. But the psychological disturbances become the part of the personality of the children left behind because they miss the shelter of father. Similarly women feel economically well-established but they also feel emotional stress, loneliness and sadness. My research will helps the policy makers and stakeholders to frame the evidence based social policies which minimize the negative impact of migration on family left behind.

Keywords: *migrant's family, children left behind, multidimensional approach*

1. Introduction

The roots of international migration are embedded with lack of employment opportunities and poverty. The people of developing countries perceive that migration is a magic tool which can solve their all economic problems. Household of developing countries thinks, migration can escape them from poverty and unemployment [1, 2]. However, along with benefits migration involve high cost, mostly uneducated people of Pakistan migrate toward other countries, they aren't able to bring their family with them so the families left behind in Pakistan [3]. The term left behind itself leaves a negative impression [4]. Therefore, migration is not an event but it is an experiment which the whole family suffers. So migration does not only affect the migrant's life rather it affects the life pattern of family and community. Mostly research discussed the impact of migration on community development, particularly, remittances as possible source of development in the community as well as in the country [5-7], but the issues of socio cultural and economic circumstances of left behind family is yet under researched. Rich literature is available in the area that how migration benefit the community development and how remittances relax income constrains on household but less information is found regarding the effect of remittances on children's educational performance, health expenditure, psychological disorders and women experiences of responsibilities and loneliness, who stay behind in the origin country. Therefore,

most popular and famous discourse on international migration gives first priority to migration stress and second attention has been given to the family left behind [8]. The direction and magnitudes of migration has been discussed a lot but still not fully understood, since migrant usually belongs to developing countries so mostly studies highlights that remittances are the cause of migration but the impact of migration on the families left behind is relatively a new facet of research [9]. Therefore, it is important to give full attention to the left behind to have better understanding of human experiences attached with migration [4]. When we want to identify the impact of migration on spouse left behind we find that literature largely focused on labour supply response of female but the challenges that she faces in the absence of male in the society are largely ignored. Migration provide greater economic opportunities to the left behinds at a high social cost, so there is dire need to explore that how male migration is experienced by the family left behind.

2. Theoretical framework

2.1 Children's education:

Parents are very much important in the life of children so the migration of any one can have certain impact on left behind children. Migration lift the liquidity constrain on household so household allocate a larger budget for child schooling and health that ultimately decreases child labour and improve school enrollment [10-12]. Migration positively affect education and health expenditure of children left behind in Moldova [13], Therefore, male migration mean absence of father from home that can also negatively affect the children attendance and grades which ultimately offset the positive effects of migration. According to [14], fathers play primary role in the children's life so their absence negatively affect the school attendance for the children left behind in Albania. Therefore, migration of parents can adversely affects the school attainment, behavior and well beings of the children left behind. Similarly migrant children have lower aspiration for education than the children of non-migrant household [15]. Consistent with this, [16], found that enrollment ratio up to matric level in migrant household is higher than non-migrant but above matric the situation is reverse and enrollment is higher in non-migrant household. However, Liang and Chen [17], findings are surprisingly different. It found that migration itself has no effect on the school performance of the children of migrant households. He compares the grades of migrant's children and non-migrant children and reject the hypothesis that migration can harm the grades. children's educational performance in rural china negatively affect by the departure of adults [18]. On the other hand remittance promotes human capital formation in migrant's household. As Yang [11], examined that migration create positive income shocks which lead toward human capital accumulation in the origin country. Children of migrant household have access to improve educational and health facilities because of remittances so migration increase enrollment and attendance. [19], reported that long term migration increase school enrollment in Tajikistan. Therefore, in the beginning people spend remittances on their daily transaction after satisfying their basic needs household allocate higher budget for their children, s education. In the case of Pakistan, the absence of male, female are the head of household but she did not give priority to her female child's educational expenditure rather than she is more protective for her male sibling and spent more on his education [16, 20].

2.2 Health of children left behind

Migration has also certain impacts on the health of the children left behind. The first year of migration may negatively affect the children health but later on family acquire access to the enriched health care opportunities, so the effect of migration on children health may be different with time [21]. According to [22], high birth weight and lower infant mortality rate in Mexico emphasis positive relationship between migration and children

health. As stated by [23], the weight for height and weight for age in children of Ecuador and found positive relationship among remittances and nutritional status of children in short run as well as in the long run. Almost 80% remittances used for the up gradation of the standard of living while only 20% invested in productive investment. The remittances also spent on children health and education. So migration brings positive affect on children left behind in a sense that more resources are allocated for their health and education [10]. In contrast, [24], stated that migration destroy the family structure and it de shape the emotion and psychology of children left behind. Vulnerability to violence, abuses and corruption increases in migrant's children.

2.3. Woman empowerment and her Psychology

Researchers suggest that remittance bring positive income effect and it raises the income of left behind and thus possibly decreases labour force participation but household doesn't receive remittance immediately after the departure of migrant it obviously take some time, if time extend it may create the stress on spouse to enter into the labour market. Thus there is a question that how the migration affect the spouse left behind. in America the participation in labour market from remittances receiving household significantly decreases [25]. According to [26], in Jamaica there is negative relationship between remittances and spouse's participation in labour market. Therefore, the income level of migrant's family positively increases and migrant's female participation in labour market significantly decreases in Egypt and Albania [27, 28]. Migration economically empowers the women of morocco that positively change the mentality and behavior of woman and it enhance the agency power of woman. In some cases if migrant fail to find a job in host country woman using agency power become bread winner. Some adverse effects of migration have been also seen like woman face difficulty in taking loan from bank in morocco [29]. The responsibilities of woman in the absence of male increase, the general hypothesis that migration changes the gender role is not acceptable in Pakistan society. In India mostly studies noted that woman autonomy and decision making ability effected by their male migration [30, 31]. Migration change gender role in India by importing higher responsibilities to female in day to day business. In the absence of male, female are supposed to take care of animal and also work on the family farm [32, 33]. Therefore, the situation may be different in Pakistan setting as [2], found that main reason of migration is poverty and unemployment in the setting of Pakistan so migration positively effects economic status of family left behind but at the same time behavioral problem among migrant's children are observed. Women feel loneliness and insecure in the absence of her male. Migration has strong positive impact on social protection of family left behind in Pakistan, however majority families feel loneliness and insecure in the absence of their male. As [34], identify that initially migration increases the responsibilities of the woman left behind and she feel loneliness without her husband. Children also feel loneliness and lack of guidance in the absence of their father. The responsibilities of Indian women increases in the absence of man and she is supposed to take care of several other things which otherwise should be done by male [35-37]. According to [38], labnes female feel that their responsibilities have been increased and their traditional role has been changed in the absence of male so migration change the structure of the family. Therefore, remittances (income sent by migrant to his family from foreign country) may upgrade economic status of the family but if there is any disruption in the provision of remittances that may change the social status by introducing change in gender role. As stated by [33], in some cases if migrant has low paid job in abroad then he failed to send enough remittances for his family livelihood, then along with other responsibilities, woman face financial hardship that force the woman to work in the farm. Therefore, woman becomes sole breadwinner with added familial and domestic responsibilities [32].

All the argument related to the impact of migration on family left behind are logical but reality is often far more complex. It may possible that reality may be less or more severe than one imagines. Migrant often delay his

migration until some male relative become available for the care of his family. When a migrant go abroad his brother and other male relative voluntarily take care of woman and family left behind [39, 40]. Male migration opens the door for gender relation negotiation. Woman becomes de facto head of the family. Traditional gender role for female may change by improving woman status and empowerment. But empowerment or female headed household are not the sign of “emancipation from male power” women may still dependent on man for their mobility [41].

3. Theoretical lens: multidimensional approach to development

In order to understand the impact of migration on development and left behind it is necessary to define exactly what development mean. Usually Development concept uses income as an indicator and it effectively exclude social, political and cultural factors. Definition of development creates serious ambiguity that hinders meaningful generalization. No doubt economic, social, cultural and political changes on both the countries are the causes as well as effect of migration. Policy makers are usually concerned with remittances for economic development and they ignore social, psychological, cultural and political impact of migration on left behind. Well-being can be measured by using tangible and intangible indicators like, income, health, education and psychology, among left behind. By considering development, as well-being, allows us to enlighten the multiple means by which migration affects left behind’s life. Moreover it allows us to use a somewhat less arbitrary benchmark to calculate the impact of migration on family left behind.

4. Research methodology

In this study we have used qualitative research paradigm. According to Creswell (1998, p.17), when little is known about the phenomenon and topic needs to be explored then qualitative nature of inquiry is appropriate. The participants have been selected by using convenience and snow ball sampling technique. There is huge gap in the literature identifying the issues faced by the women and children left behind in Pakistan. Thus to have in depth qualitative information on the effect of male migration on family left behind, I have chosen Tehsil Daska for two reasons.

1: Rate of male migration is very high.

2: Being Daska as my native place, I can easily approach the left behind members.

The selected sample is a careful choice consisting of woman whose husband is out of country from last five years and having at least two school going children. Faces to face semi structured interviews were conducted for this study. The interviews were in Urdu language for the convenience of the participant, interviews were tape recorded with the consent of participant and they have the right to withdraw from the study anytime. At the end, each interview was translated and transcribed. To ensure that transcriptions reflects the true interpretation of the participants, transcriptions were sent to the participants for checking (member checking), which enhance the validity of interview data. To keep the identity of the participant confidential, codes were used. To have a look at how and why a phenomenon occurs within the community and who is the part of phenomenon, I have used a case study approach. Berg (2007) stated that case study approach helps in the collection of rich in depth qualitative information on a specific phenomenon in specific setting. There are two major research questions asked in this study:

1: How male migration affects the wellbeing of children left behind?

2: How migration effect wellbeing of women left behind in Pakistan?

In order to have the answer of these two major questions, many sub questions were asked.

5. Results

5.1 Findings and discussion

The response which we have obtained from in depth interviews are grouped under different themes to discuss above mentioned research questions

5.1.1 Conceptualizing the wellbeing of children

Theoretical lense of multidimensional approach to development is used to explain the wellbeing of children by using tangible indicators like budget allocation for children's education and health and intangible indicators like emotions and psychology of children left behind. Multidimensional approach to development is good to analyses that how the overall wellbeing of families left behind effected by male migration[42].

The interview data highlighted that parents are conceptualizing the wellbeing of their children as an investment in children's education and health. Each participant understands the importance of education to enhance the wellbeing of the children. It further suggests that personal and cultural perspectives are important in decisions making regarding investment toward children's education. It is a general perception in Pakistan that peer learning in private school and collages is better than public schools. Therefore in Pakistan the migrant's families are economically well off, so they enroll their children in private school. As one participant *"my children are learning in private schools, where expenditures are really huge, so when my husband send remittances, I feel that remittances are more than enough for our needs, but after paying the school fees, tuition fee, van charges and daily pocket money, I left with very little money for my other household requirements (R8 and R1)"*.

The data reflects that household expenditure choices are affected by children, s educational requirements. The household gives the first priority to children education and allocate the major portion of budget for children's educational requirements. As [19], found that after certain time period of migration, household allocate higher budget for their children, s education. According to Yang [11], examined that migration uplift the economic status of the family left behind and children of migrant's household have better access to the facilities of education and health. Moreover, some women think that her husband was not highly qualified so that's why he could not get job in Pakistan and that causes disintegration of family. So to avoid the separation of their children in future, women are providing appropriate opportunities to their children.

5.1.2 Grades attainment

Migration also effects school performance of the migrant's children, in this respect one participant expressed her feeling in the follow way:

Yes, my elder son does not go to university regularly and he started loitering and joins bad company; his educational performance is also not satisfactory. He often creates problems for me. Now I have asked my husband that wind up your business and come back in Pakistan to check the elder son properly (R3)

Participant feels that presence of father can bring positive change in the behavior of his elder son. As mentioned by [14], that in Albania the absence of fathers negatively effects the school attendance of children because the fathers play primary role in the children's life so their absence effects the school grades and performance. According to [15, 16], enrollment ratio up to matric level in migrant household is higher than non-migrant but above than matric the situation is reverse and enrollment is higher in non-migrant household.

5.1.3 Remittances- health connections

Remittances are considered a stable source of finance; on average remittances have two types of effect on household wellbeing. First, short term effect of remittances is increase in consumption and poverty alleviation while long term effect of remittances are being invested for education and health status improvement. Some women reported that the height and weight of their children are better than their age mates. It is also evident from previous research that migration and health of children are positively correlated. As stated by [23], the weight for height and weight for age in children of Ecuador positively related with remittances and nutritional status of children is improved in short run as well as in the long run. Another participant stated in this respect:

My children's height and weight is better than their age mates. Especially my daughter's weight and height is much better than their age mates and both looks mature than their fellows (R4).

The interview data highlight that the absence of father positively affect the health of female child. Similar results found by [20] in Pakistan, he stated that migration provide better health opportunities to Pakistani girls and found that girls in migrant families are taller than non-migrant families. There is positive effect of remittances on child health by providing easy access to health care services [43].

5.1.4 Children's Love for their Father

Family structure, care and discipline from parents significantly affect the children's emotions and behaviors. Children of migrants are grown up under the supervision of single parent so the lack of parental care may cause a high social cost. Absence of men can create psychological insecurity among the children left behind. Study explored that in the absence of father children feel sadness and insecurity. As one participant expressed her feeling in the following manners:

When my husband visits us, my children feel happy with the presence of their father so their behavior is very cool and calm in that period they play with neighbor's children and show them the things which their father brings for them from abroad. But when my husband goes back abroad my children become agitated even my son some time calls his father while crying. Although they talk with the father daily and sometime they demand from their father to come back in Pakistan (R4).

Data highlighted that the presence of father bring pleasant changes in the personality of children and their absence create some psychological gaps, which can become problematic in near future. Sometime absence of father creates health issues for the left behind children as one of my participants explained:

When my husband migrated, at that time my daughter became sick, she was not comfortable in inhaling I thought that she got some allergy but when we went doctor he said that she basically missing her father and separation of father built a stress on her psychology and she feel problem in inhaling (R5).

The data highlights that emotion and psychology of children negatively affected by the father's migration. The emotional stress and psychological disturbance may damage the child's overall personality and create certain types of gaps. As [24], stated that migration destroy the family structure and it de shape the emotion and psychology of children left behind.

5.1.5 Responsible attitude

Similarly the children whose fathers are migrated they may have more responsibilities in their households. They become more responsible and sensible in their attitude as compared with their age mates. As participants explained that:

My elder son looks after all the affairs related to education and health of his younger brothers and my children become more responsible in the absence of their father (R2, R4, and R6)

Interview data expressed that migrant's children become mature and responsible before time. In our society father's role is like umbrella, the absence of father some time made the children left behind pessimist, shy and silent (Lu, 2011).

5.2 Migration and wives left behind

The decision of male to migrate is not an easy task because it has certain physical, financial and emotional effects on the women left behind. The most prominent effect is grouped under various themes as discussed below.

5.2.1 Women enjoy improved socio economic status

Almost 90% participants reported that before migration there was poverty in our home and the responsibilities of children's education, health and marriages were unsurpassable tasks. As one of the participant explained:

My husband did not have any job in Pakistan, we were very poor, at that time me and my son used to work, the responsibilities of my children were very depressing, so my husband decided to go abroad but now Alhamdulillah we have all facilities of life (R6).

The data highlighted that major cause of migration was poverty and migration bring significant effect on socio economic status of the left behinds. As [43], founds that household income, consumption, and asset are positively affected by remittance.

5.2.2 Women as controller of remittances

In the absence of male, women enjoy the greater autonomy in the management of household finances. The women who are living in nuclear family system have more control over the use of remittances than those who are living in joint family system. In my research it has been observed that almost 94% migrant's household are living in nuclear family system so she divide remittances among household activities as she want. She received remittances by herself on frequent basis. Their husband never late the remittances, so in term of finance they did not face any problem and they feel economically protected. 90% participants shared the same feeling as R4 stated:

Yes I feel economically protected because I received remittances every month on regular basis, my husband never late the remittances even he send us money by borrowing from friends, because he knows that the fesses and utility bills cannot be delayed (R4).

Data highlighted the women confidence and access over remittances. Women access to the remittance money increased her autonomy in managing the household decision [44-46]. If some time remittances late due to certain reason women have some saving [43], they manage the household activities from their savings. As one participant hinted that; *if it is late I spend from my savings (R6).*

But the women who are living in joint family system have lower access to the remittances. One participant expressed her feelings as follow:

I feel when my husband come in Pakistan to visit us in those days me and my children have more resources for consumption and we do shopping, visits our relatives and go for outing with the children but when he migrated,

I do not know that how much money my husband send to my father in law but my father in law give Rs. 1500 per month for my personal consumption which are insufficient for my needs (R4).

Study explore that the women who are living in joint family system, have no access to remittances so their economic condition in some cases, is worse. According to [40], usually migrant does not send remittance directly to his wife, father in law or any other male member receive remittance that create serious conflict between migrant's wife and her in laws.

5.2.3 No role in decision making

Surprisingly my findings are different from literature in term of women participation in decision making. As per literature women participation in decision making increases in the absence of male. Migration change gender role in India by importing higher responsibilities to female in day to day business. In the absence of male, female are supposed to take important decision related family [32, 33]. While in my research female participation in decision making did not increased but all the decision related to children are still taken by father. He, (migrant) basically dictates the women in different family matters. Only 20% women said she makes the decision with the consent of her male while 80% expressed that migrant himself decide all important issues of family. According to Elson (1992), female headed household are not the sign of "emancipation from male power" women may still dependent on man while making decision regarding her children and for her. As participants reported that:

My husband decides about the education of my children. My elder son is hafiz- e- Quran, when he completed his hifz, he wanted to enroll in 8th class but his father said that do wait for me I will come Pakistan to visit you people in this year, then I will enrolled you in school (R4, R5 and R6).

In Pakistan society strong patriarchal principles assign the male a dominant role in household decision making while the role of female is caregiver in our society. My research explores that in Pakistan the traditional roles did not change. Male migration strengthens rather than weaken the traditional gender ideology [39]. According to [30], limited autonomy and share decision making process has been observed in Indian context, Pakistan traditions are also similar to Indian society, so the same situation has been observed in Pakistan. Another important fact has been explored that even the decision of migration is made without female consent. As one participant explained that "*without my consent he decided to go abroad with his brother*" (R1).

5.2.4 Challenges faced by the women left behind

At the time of his departure, I was facing a serious mental stress because family separation, breakdown of social support network and additional responsibilities were making me nervous ([47], one of the participants express her feeling as follow: *when he (migrant) was going I strongly wish that kaash I can stop him because there was something which was frustrating me (R10).*

In Asian context male is the guardian of his female and he is responsible for her security so the absence of husband put restriction on mobility of women left behind. The interview data also highlighted the same concept which we found in the literature that purdah and absence of her male put strict restriction on women mobility in most part of the country. Even the women who do not practice purdah [31], they also expect to look for help from other family members for her movement at the time of need. As one participant reported:

Of course with husband movement in society is easy. But now when I want to visit my parents I asked my brothers for help and some time I request to my brother in law. All it become very difficult some time (R1).

The quote of this participant represents that there is always a male figure in the society to help the women left behind because of her restricted mobility. Moreover, male migrant delay his migration decision unless a male

relative become available to look after the family left behind in his absence [40]. The data also point out other interesting emerging theme that women left behind are not satisfied with upbringing of children and relationships with in-laws. As one participant expressed her feelings:

No, I am not satisfied because I think father's role in the upbringing of children is also necessary..... my children consult their father through Skype (R1, R5).

According to [48], father is responsible for providing shelter, material and welfare to the family. So children are inspired by the father's personality, it is general perception that in their absence, family face many challenges for survival in the society. Society also become problematic for lonely women, people deceive the women and irritate them by using different ways when they know that her male is out of country. One participant shared the same feelings that:

There were many problems which I faced after the departure of my husband.it was bitter experience for me when I saw the changing behavior of my in laws and even my own blood (R2).

Data highlighted that security of women and children in the absence of father is in danger.

5.2.5 Women conceptualizes the male migration as departure

Some participant reported that they feel loneliness in the absence of her male. As one of participant shared her feelings:

I feel his absence very much when he visits us, after his departure I feel sadness and loneliness for many day and I feel his fragrance from the things around me (R4).

Another participant provides information and she said that: *At the beginning of migration I was very afraid and insecure because of having responsibilities but now thanks to God I am satisfied (R1).*

Data highlighted that the economic security made the woman brave and confident. As [34], identify that initially, migration increases the responsibilities of the woman left behind and she feel loneliness without her husband.

5.3 Means of communication

Study explore that migrant's family regularly connect with the migrant through skp, internet and mobile. Latest technology shrinks the distance and that decrease the level of sadness in family. Several participants commented that they use communication tool such as skp and internet.

6. Conclusion

Migration has certain effects on, socio economic status of family, human capital formation, and emotion and psychology of left behind members [9, 24, 39, 49]. Family left behind experience two types of consequences. One is positive like improvement in quality of life, increase in income of household and has greater access to the variety of goods and services and other one is negative like children and women's feeling of insecurity and loneliness. This study also reveals that migration upgrade the socio economic setup of migrant's family by providing them better access to the comforts and luxuries of life. My study also reveals that women do not have significant role in decision making. All the important decision related to children education and health is made by male migrant. Although he is living in abroad but he is controlling the all family matter through Net and phone. Woman who is living with husband and whose husband is migrant, both have limited freedom and autonomy in decision making [50]. Similarly study reveal that women are not satisfied with the upbringing of children. It has been also observed women in the absence of her male are dependent on other male member of

extended family for her movement in the society. She and her children are also facing emotional disturbance and feelings of loneliness and sadness. Therefore a woman faces so many challenges in exchange of economic prosperity. Therefore, the economic benefits are higher enough that she becomes ready to face the challenges with in the family and society.

7. Limitations and future direction

The study utilizes the small sample of ten wives of migrant's household from tehsil Daska. The validity of study is dependent on interpretation of interviews and the ability of researcher to identify the emerging themes from interview data. Study only focuses the family whose male has been migrated; however by incorporating non migrant household into the study more interesting themes can be emerged. Moreover, this study focused to those children who are living with mothers while father is out migrated. In future researcher can research how parental (father and mother) migration can affect the wellbeing children left behind.

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