

EMIGRATION AND THE WELFARE OF THE ABANDONED CHILDREN: A CASE STUDY OF DISTRICT PESHAWAR, KP, PAKISTAN**Dr. Hamida**

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Abstract

This study was conducted to appraise and gauge the influence of fathers' emigration on the welfare of the abandoned children in district Peshawar, KP, Pakistan. Quantitative research method was used for the current study. Twenty-one Private Schools in Peshawar Cantonment, Pakistan, were used for data collection. The study population for the current research was the students of 9th and 10th. Through simple random sampling technique, a sample of 221 students was taken. The data was collected on the basis of simple random sampling using a questionnaire. For the analysis of data, Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) computer program was used. The collected data was analyzed under the theoretical framework of "Emotional Attachment Theory" and "Family System Theory" presented by John Bowlby (1969) and Dr. Murray Bowen (1950) respectively. The findings of the study infer that emigration has both pros and cons for the left-behind children. Physically and materially these children were positively affected, whereas, socially and mentally they were adversely affected. In the light of the findings, the researcher recommends that the emigrant fathers should have maximum telephonic contact with their children, the government should arrange saving systems for the families of the immigrants ensuring the moderate-cum-just utilization of the remittances, every educational institution should arrange caring and counseling services for the children whose parents are abroad, the guardians of the children whose parents are abroad should look after them and persuade them for sports and exercise which, in turn, will ensue psychological and physical fitness. These families should retain in highly developed umworld ensuring the socialization and safety of their children, the government should devise inclusive strategies to stop the brain drain of skilled labors, and the government should devise inclusive economic policies spending on the social sector to alleviate poverty.

Keywords: Emigration, Left-behind Children, Well-being, Impact.**Introduction**

Emigration is a multifaceted phenomenon having possibilities like permanent or temporary migration, migrating in groups or in isolation, moving ahead to other foreign countries or coming back, etc. (Chiswick, 1978). Emigration is a sociopolitical-cum-economic movement affecting the man who is migrating, the country where he/she is migrating, and the family members at home. The main motive behind emigration is to improve life standard, however, the results adverse and contrary to the expectation (Farooq & Javed, 2009). Migrating abroad transforms the abandoned families downright. Abroad employment and settlement in the foreign communities have increased emigration worldwide (Kahanec & Zimmerman, 2008).

Emigration is believed by scholars to have efficacy for both the countries, viz. the country of arrival and the abandoned nation affecting them economically socially and psychologically. This alteration is brought by the new foreign-social setup, higher wages and nostalgia — home longing (Kahance & Zimermann, 2008). After a father's migration, the miserable life of his children starts. Wanting their fathers' care and love, children who are in the developing age are particularly affected receiving multifarious psychological issues (Clemens, 2011).

After their emigration, the emigrants struggle to send huge sums of money to their home country. Constructing new houses, buying new plots and educating their children private sector standard schools remain their main targets. As a whole, their aim is the true well-being of their children. Well-being is a multifaceted phenomenon integrating mental, material, social and physical aspects. These four different aspects of the well-being constitute a healthy and developed child (Pollard & Lee, 2003).

Physical welfare entails healthiness, physical fitness, and enough ability to function bodily. Mental well-being refers to the psychological fitness and normal functionality of cognitive system and emotionality (Ryan & Deci, 2001). Social well-being refers to one's ability to adjust oneself peacefully in the surrounding world. Forming constructive relations with relatives and those in the immediate lifecycle is a symbol of social well-being (Baston, 2008). All unavoidable for a standard life, proper sustenance, raiment, housing and material prosperity entail material well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2001). Unaware of the miseries inflicted upon their children and the wanting parental love and care, the emigrant fathers think their children to be all happy and prosperous. In fact, on the occasion of different national and religious festivals, these children miss their emigrant fathers. Resultantly, the emigration of fathers affects the children socially and mentally (Azhar, 2008).

One among the few nations sending multitudes abroad, since its inception, Pakistan has been sending labors to different countries in the Middle East. These labors are working abroad and generating revenue causing a great benefit to the national exchequer besides advancing their families welfare. Started by the late Zulfikar Ali Bhutto — the then prime minister — in 1970s, Pakistan sent around 3 million labors to different Arabian countries (Muhammad et al., 2010).

According to Khan (2014), being the world's 10th largest — and Asia's 2nd — country in terms of population, around seven million Pakistani International emigrants are residing in different countries around the world. The remittances of these emigrants have greatly boosted up Pakistani economy. As per the statistics of the State Bank of Pakistan (2007), from 1970 to 2007, around seventy billion US Dollars were sent to Pakistan as remittances reducing poverty and boosting up the standard of life.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

For Ratha (2006), international remittances are efficacious sources backing the economies of developing nations. It is believed that foreign remittances assist the families of the emigrants economically reducing their poverty graph. Helping the household in different aspects, these remittances reduce poverty, enhances life standard, and improves the overall quality of life (Koc & Onan, 2004).

According to Lucas and Robert (2006), it's a fact acknowledged around the globe that Pakistan has benefited in tons from the remittances of the emigrants. There is an increasing demand of Pakistani labors in the market. Above all, the alleviation of poverty has been the main output of these remittances. For Gazdar (2003), initially, the demand of Pakistani labor remained limited only to the services of construction, later on, it evolved into different sectors like transportation, security, business and trade. For Hanson and Woodruff (2003), the absence of fathers, because of emigration, puts many responsibilities on the children to help and support the family in domestic duties and doings. This domestic business of children has upset the scholarly performance of children in school.

According to McKenzie and Rapoport (2007), emigration of fathers affects the schooling of their children negatively. In the protracted absence of fathers, the wanting of parental care and check on their children increases the possibility of their dropout or poor performance in school. On the contrary, according to the Chinese Lai and Chen (2010), the children of the emigrant fathers were better than those at home. Besides, tempted by bad manners and selfishness, the personalities of the abandoned children were also less placid.

Khan et al. (2010) states that the abandoned children, of the emigrant fathers suffer — besides wanting guidance, confidence affection — loneliness and anxiety in the absence of their fathers. For Zachariah et al. (2001), the expatriates' abandoned families suffer from psychiatric conditions such as loneliness, tension, anxiety and lack of confidence. Despite the better schooling care, the educational results of the male children of the expatriates were gloomy and dejected.

According to Lu and Treiman (2007), international remittances help the left-behind families to alleviate domestic and gender incongruities. The major transformation upheaval was observed in the educational sector where the number of enrollments hiked in the private sector schools.

According to Lee and Park (2010), emigration negatively affects the welfare of the abandoned children. Greatly tempted by school leaving and dropout, these children were showing poor results in the schooling performance. Besides showing poor educational results, the male children of the expatriates have a greater tendency of dropping out from the school. Remittances send by the expatriate fathers have positive impact on their children schooling enabling children to have better private schooling. On the contrary, it also has negative impact causing lack of self-confidence and protection in children. The international transmittals greatly helped in the alleviation of capital threats and limitations. Adams and Page (2005) examined that in developing countries, poverty has been reduced by the foreign remittances.

According to Abbasi and Irfan (1983), foreign remittances have dramatically transformed the social life of the left-behind families boosting up their life standard, expenses and consumption. As compare to the other families, the left-behind families of the emigrants were observed to be more expensive and lavish on the occasion of different national and social festivals.

Besides its multifaceted vantages, emigration also negatively affects the abandoned families and those migrating to foreign lands (Kuhn et al., 2011). The most conspicuous impact is the increase in per capita budget. Expensive health services and care is enjoyed by the abandoned families. Summarily, as a whole, emigration positively affects the health of the abandoned families.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Objectives of this study are:

- Assessing the physical and material well-being of the left-behind children of the emigrants.
- To analyze the social, mental and emotional welfare of the left-behind children of the emigrants.

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

This study was based on the hypothesis that:

- The higher the father-child contact, the higher will be the welfare of the child
- The higher the foreign remittances, the higher will be the welfare of the children.
- The higher the sport and exercise, the higher will be the welfare of the children.

METHODOLOGY

The prime aim of this study was to determine the impact of foreign migration on the welfare of the abandoned families' children. As per the nature and objectives of the study, quantitative methodology was used to identify data. Further, 21 private schools, Situated in Peshawar Cantonment, were used for data collection. The study population for the current research was 9th and 10th class students whose fathers were abroad in Middle East. Through simple random sampling technique, a sample of 221 students — whose fathers were expatriates — out of a total of 494 students was taken. The sample comprised of 57% and 43% students from class 9th and 10th respectively. Their age ranged from 14 to 17.

Using the simple random technique, the data was collected through questionnaire using survey method. As survey research aims at generalization of results of study on entire population, the results of the research were generalized from sample to whole population. The multistage sampling procedure was used for data collection. Before data collection and utilization of questionnaires, a pre-test was conducted for formative assessment to check the comprehensibility of the instructions.

For the analysis of data, the collected data was categorized, coded and edited. Different strategies and tests were applied to analyze the data. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) computer programs was used for data analysis. The collected data was first edited, secondly categorized and finally coded with the help of descriptive statistics. Besides, Pearson Correlation Coefficient was used to find the significant differences and relations among dependent and independent variables.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The current study was conducted to gauge the impact of emigration on the well-being of left-behind children. The collected data was analyzed under the theoretical framework of “Emotional Attachment Theory” and “Family System Theory” presented by John Bowlby (1969) and Dr. Murray Bowen (1950) respectively. Presented in 1969 by John Bowlby, the emotional attachment theory states that healthy and proper development of children rests upon the relationship between the parents and children causing a sense of foundation. This wanting parent-child attachment hinders children’s proper socialization and results in numerous psychiatric conditions (Bowlby, 1969). According to Family System theory, all members of a family are different units of the emotional organic unity with each a separate role and responsibility being interconnected with a sense of unity and cooperation each with a separate role. Hence, for the fulfillment of their needs and living together harmoniously, all the members of family are dependent on each other working as a unit. Each of the family members has their own responsibilities and roles to perform making it impossible to live in isolation. The appropriate accomplishment of the assigned roles and responsibilities capacitates the family while their inexecution causes incapacitation.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of the study show that:

- Majority of the respondents (59%) had the monthly income between 50001-100000.
- Majority of the respondents (52.5%) use to pay visits to their homeland once a year.
- 46.2% of the population had daily contact with their abroad fathers on phone and internet.
- 67.9% of the respondents said that remittances are sent to them on monthly base.
- Majority of the population (54.8%) expressed that fact that in the absence of their fathers, their mothers were their guardians.
- Less than half of the population i.e. (41.6%) said that they were overburdened with the domestic responsibilities.
- Little above the one their (35.7%) of the population expressed their views that their domestic responsibilities were because of the abroad migration of their fathers.
- 31.2% of the population used to exercise.
- 49.8% population was living in their own purchased houses.
- Less than half, i.e. 46.6% of the population expressed their views that they are living in highly developed areas.
- 48.9% of the population were having their own automobiles.
- 33.5% of the population had installed Air Conditions in at their homes.
- 36.7% of the population was using smart phones.
- 41.2% of the population was of the opinion that their welfare was due to foreign migration of their fathers.
- Less than half (41.2%) of the respondents agreed that their financial status is good because of their father’s migration.
- 55.7% of the population was happy with their family members
- 14.6% population was treated with love and care by their family members giving them time and care.
- 42.5% population was happy and enjoyed their schooling and wanted to be highly educated.
- 42.1% of the population was alert and attentive in their classrooms.
- 39.4% of the interviewees expressed the fact that they properly understood their teachers.
- 39.4% of the population had peaceful neighborhood with educated people all around.
- 48% of the respondents were active in social activities.
- 32.6% of the children were not happy with their fathers’ abroad migration.
- 33.9% were suffering from insomnia.
- 30.3% of the children were facing health issues such as headache, stomach disorders, etc.

CONCLUSION

Emigration is a sociopolitical-cum-economic movement affecting the man who is migrating, the country where he/she is migrating, and the family members at home.

The study was carried to know the influence of emigration on the well-being of the abandoned children. Physical well-being, mental well-being, social well-being and material well-being were the different indicators used to assess the well-being of the abandoned children. The amelioration of livelihood was inferred by the data to be the prime factor behind foreign migration. They receive hostile effects on their abandoned children. However, the migration of the fathers ensue a conspicuous amelioration in the life standard of the left-behind children. These children enjoy better-cum-expensive health care receiving quality cure services in private hospitals. The parents of these children choose standard foreign medication for their children which in turn helps improve their physical well-being. On the contrary, in the protracted absence of their fathers, the left-behind children suffer mental strains exhibiting depression, anxiety, minimal self-confidence, downheartedness and sense of isolation. The emigration of fathers adversely mars the social welfare the abandoned children marring the family's informal safety systems. Besides, the family's responsibilities at home cause tension for the children left-behind. Owing to the feelings of guardian's privation in the protracted absence of their fathers, these children deserve special attention and consideration. It becomes more troublesome for these children to stay in school. They are likely to develop the tendency toward bad manners and selfishness. However, on the paradigm of physical well-being, the left-behind children were atop. The flow of remittances from the immigrant fathers changes the economic standard of the left-behind family. These families relish sumptuous livelihood, magnificent-cum-elegant housing, expensive goods and increased consumptions. Pertinently, it is inferred by the findings that emigration affects the abandoned family both positively and negatively. Their physical and material well-beings were affected positively while the social and mental negatively.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In the light of the findings of the study — in order to incommode the adverse impact of international migration on the left-behind children — it is recommended that:

1. The findings show that sport plays a vital role in the physical and psychological development of children. Henceforth, it is recommended that families should provide opportunities of sport to the abandoned children.
2. The maximal level of interaction between the father and the child has constructive impact on the abandoned children. Henceforth, the government ought to introduce cheap internet and telephone packages helping the community to increase their contact.
3. Although it backed Pakistani economy, the remittances sent by the foreign migrants were extravagantly misused by their family members. Pertinently, the administration should introduce new accounts of saving for these families.
4. The taxes on the remittances shall be reduced.
5. The non-availability of the emigrant fathers causes anxiety, depression and lack of confidence in the abandoned children. Pertinently, every institution should provide counseling services to the abandoned children in order to promote their socialization.
6. Every community plays a vital role in the social development of children. It is recommended that the families of the emigrants should live in highly developed and social umbrworld.
7. The guardians of the abandoned children should guide and counsel these children.
8. Poverty is the driving force behind emigration. The government should devise inclusive economic policies spending on the social sector to alleviate poverty
9. Most of the emigrants are highly sagacious, shrewd, resourceful and qualified people. In order to benefit from them, the government should devise inclusive strategies to stop their brain drain ensuring the utilization of their inter-community services.

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