

# Socio-Economic Factors of Female's Rural to Urban Migration: Two Time Period Analysis in Pakistan

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**Abstract:-** Migration for better standards of life and opportunities has been centuries old phenomenon. Migration around the world has been taking place internationally as well as domestically. Worldwide, majority of people are reported to be internal migrants and the trend of urbanization has become an increasing these days, especially in developing countries. Presently, about 37 percent population of Pakistan is living in the urban centers while by 2025, it is expected that more than half of the population will settle in the urban areas. Aside from this, another important aspect of rural to urban migration exists which has been increasingly known as the “feminization” of migration. This study aims at estimating the gender aspect of internal migration through various socio-economic factors of migration such as age, age square, marital status, level of education, vocational training and status in the family. A probit regression model is used, by extracting the data from the Labor Force Survey (2010-11 and 2017-18). The findings showed that mostly females prefer to migrate due to non-economic factors (marriages, health care services, being associates of migration etc.) while males migrate for both economic (job arrangements, educational opportunities, business) and non-economic factors. Level of education and vocational training appeared as important factors to empower females and give them the independence to migrate; additionally, when females are charged as head of household, they are most likely to migrate than when males are heads of the household. However, the statistics (2017-18) also proved that males have been seen to be migrating more for marriage which is a better trend towards cultural change in the prevailing orthodox society of Pakistan. For further policy implications, it is suggested that more focus be given towards improving standard of education and vocational facilities for females, especially in the rural areas.

**Keywords:** Migration, Economic and non-economic Factors, Rural to Urban Migration, Gender differences, Pakistan

**JEL Classification:** F22, O15, R23, J16

## I. INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of migration, where people move from one place to another in search of better living conditions, livelihood and refuge are a part of human nature and have been a part of human history. This migration can happen internationally, as from one country to another, or can happen within a country (internally). Within country migration, i.e. migration from rural to the urban areas is known as

“urbanization”. The National Library of Medicine (2014) describes this urbanization as “the gradual increase in the proportion of people living in urban areas”, and the ways in which every community society adapts the change. This change in migration has influence on environment, society norms, household culture etc. In addition, migration greatly affects the cities that face an influx of people from rural areas because these urban areas are associated with better living standards, higher literacy rates, easy access to healthcare and other social services. Internationally, it has been believed that most of the international and national migrants are men as they look for livelihood and better life opportunities. The migration composition by gender was first estimated in 1998 by the United Nations Population Division and since then it has been found that females have been accounted for about half of the migrants in the world (Zlotnik, 2003). Worldwide, a wide proportion of females have been found to be migrants that have been migrating internationally and internally. Even though mostly females travel with their family or join their family members moving for the destination of their choice, but recently most of them have been discovered to be migrating to gain access to better economic opportunities for example; education or employment. Several countries have higher rates of female migration than that of males. It is estimated by the International Labor Organization (ILO) that about seventy to eighty percent of migrants, worldwide, comprise of females. This pattern of migration has been termed as “the Feminization of Migration” in gender studies and has been recently the focus of several studies, as the proportion of female’s migration is greater than males. These females migrants include both international migrants, that migrate to other countries and internal, that migrate from rural to the urban areas. Whether the migration is to other countries or to the urban areas, the motives for migration mostly remain the same: search for a better life. There has been extensive research done on females and their migration from one country to another and their urbanization patterns (Martin, 2003). Since, the world is rapidly becoming urbanized; this migration to urban centers has become even more of a focus by researchers and policy makers.

What is of interest here is the dynamics of females in migration. When migration occurs, it can transform the traditional norms of a household. As cities are famous for more freedom (especially for females, marriages etc), higher opportunities for education and cultural exploration and more equitable societal norms; migration to cities can increase the access of women to resources and better opportunities. Along with this, women can improve their independence, self-esteem, self worth and level of authority in one's community and family. Even if females migrate with their families, they gain better access to economic and social opportunities. Most of the time, factors behind rural to urban migration and even international migration is the access to better resources for the female members of the household (Fleury, 2016). Internationally, women's role in migration has changed from being amongst the companions of male migrants to them migrating as bread winners that provide for their families through remittances both in internal and international migration. The importance of differentiating between male and female migration is due to the differences they have in their migratory behaviors such as facing different opportunities and different challenges for instance; discrimination, exploitation, abuse or violation of human rights. Thus, it is then established that migration is not as gender neutral as it has been normally assumed to be and their experience of migration can be a lot different than that of males. Similarly, the reasons for migration also differ for both males and females. Even though, the search for better employment, supporting the family, avail better economic and social opportunities and freedom are common goals for both males and females alike but when it comes to migration, women are faced with more financial constraints and extreme decision making. Therefore, poverty and economic opportunities do drive female migration, but the non-economic factors tend to impact this migration a lot more. The rural patriarchal system that restricts freedom and opportunities, escaping a failed or abusive marriage and aiming for gender equality has a much more influence on the female migration.

Aside from this, the major reason behind females migrating has remained to be marriage; where women either travel to the cities or other countries as wives or travel in order to marry. In the subcontinent, where the arrange marriages are common, the migration of women have been mostly due to accompanying their husbands to the cities or travelling to the cities in search of a husband. The reason behind the marriage, however, can remain to be the search and desire for a better life for themselves and their families (UNPF, 2006). From gender perspective (urban to rural) migration, there has been some commendable work done in Pakistan by Farooq and Cheema (2005), Hamid (2010) and Ahmad et al (2013) that have revealed the gender differences in rural to urban migration. Nevertheless, there is a lack of focus or concentration towards feminine reasons for migration. A gap is also present in comparatively analyzing the gender differences in migration amongst the different cities in

Pakistan. This study aims at estimating the gender aspect of urbanization through different socio-economic factors of migration including age, age square, vocational training, marital status, level of education and status in the family. This study also focuses on the factors that influence females a lot more than it influences males. A probit regression model is used, extracting data from the Labor Force Surveys (2010-11 and 2017-18). To analyze the female's various aspect of migration, detailed descriptive analysis is being carried out, and emphasizing more on the gender comparison by investigating the pattern and factors behind female's migration.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The internal migration is of four types; urban to urban, rural to rural, urban to rural and rural to urban. Amongst these, the rural to urban migration has been given more importance due to its significant effect in the urban development, both the developing and developed countries. A lot of studies have focused on several factors which led to migration, but there exists scarce work focused on the female driven migration. Urbanization and the factors that influence it have long been studied by researchers such as Lewis (1954); Fei and Ranis (1964) that brought dual-economic models into use to see the impact of migration from the rural areas on the employment in each sector of the cities. Similar popular work in this area includes: Todaro (1969), Fields (1975, 1986), Harris and Todaro (1970), Sliglitz (1976), Lukas (1985) and Lipton (1977) used sophisticated models developed by Todaro that incorporated rural to urban migration which is contributed due to the urban and rural wage differences and expectation can be calculated through multiplying the expected income with the possibility of employment in the urban areas.

Thereafter; extension is made by Stifel and Thorbecke (2003); Thorbecke, 1997 on the dual economy that emphasized on the both traditional and modern sectors that exist within rural and urban areas. On a similar note, Sjaastad (1962) aimed at clarifying the migration pattern through a theoretical framework of human capital which depicted that migration was influenced by age, market structures, mobility of resources and state policies. Amongst earlier works, focusing on gender differences in migration and feminine migration was done by Thadani and Todaro (1984); they constructed a gender specific framework that pinpointed the female specific reasons for migration. Their findings concluded that females like males tend to migrate for acquiring a job or employment but they also migrate for the purpose of marriage. They pinpointed four kinds of women that migrate to cities; unmarried whom migrated for employment purposes, married whom migrated for employment purposes, married whom migrated while accompanying their husbands or family and have no desire to seek employment and unmarried women migrating in search of marriage (Hugo, 1993). Marriage or accompanying family does appear to be an important factor that causes women to migrate but this reason is not restricted to women. There is data present that indicates men have to be

migrated due to associational factors (United Nations, 1993; Martin, 2003). In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, mostly women migrated from the rural to the urban areas in search of jobs such as garment industrial workers, domestic servants and employees in the services sector (retail etc). The evidence of such migration is seen in developing countries where poverty has forced several men and women alike to travel to the cities in search of employment opportunities. Amongst these women, many have given up their agricultural background and a majority is employed as domestic servants (Martin, 2003). Since, the domestic sector is mostly left to be undocumented or improperly researched; most women remain to be invisible and unrewarded (Institute of Migration, 2011). In a study of Mexico, Antman (2015) analyzed that bargaining power is affected by migration of the household members. She found that when the family members, especially males migrated, women had more power in the household. However, when these family members returned, the bargaining power of these women decreased. Antman (2018) in her paper examined literature in women migration and found that female migration affects not only the country from where she migrates but also the destination she reaches. She concluded that it is difficult to compare different research that has used different countries and methods. She recommended further work where the women migration is explored thoroughly. Specifically speaking of South Asian countries, evidence dictates that when it comes to urbanization, the female concentrated migration is found to be much more prominent (Arrifin, 1984; Arnold and Pranptipi, 1984; Eviota and Smith, 1984; Skeldon, 1986). Particularly speaking of India, the prior pattern of male dominated migration has been replaced with families migrating that include females either as sisters, wives, mothers or daughters (Krishnaraj, 2005). Aminuddin (2018) explored the effects of female migration on parents that have been left behind in Indonesia, concentrating on the East Java Province. They found diverse effects on the parents being left behind whether the daughters are married or not. They also found that parents of married daughters received more remittances especially when they were involved in childcare.

In Pakistan, it is normally indicated in research that women mostly migrate as companions, but some research (qualitative and otherwise) in Punjab such as Farooq and Cheema (2005) have found that education along with equal gender opportunities for employment has driven several women and their families to migrate to the cities. In Pakistan, Sadaqat (1995) used a sample of 6275 households in Karachi and CMI data in a linear, log and semi log models deducted that the low agricultural income is the most important driver for migration while higher non-agricultural income drives people to head to the cities. It was also found that a stand out reason for migrating can be when family members have already arranged a job for them. Amongst work focused on gender differences in migration. Identifying the internal and external migration, Irfan, et, al. (1983) used PLM surveys of 1969, 1971 and 1981 and found that the migration has been

becoming increasingly long distance and dominantly rural to urban. Similarly, Memon (2005) used the Pakistan Integrated Household Survey, Labor Force Survey (1998-99) and the Census 1998 to deduct the rural to urban migration. Using probit estimation, they estimated the effects of age, marriage status, experience, years of level of education, wage difference and possession of agricultural land to see the effect on migration. Their findings show that wage difference is a huge factor when it comes to migration. These studies mainly explain the migration causes and dimensions but only few aimed to explain the gender perspective. There are other studies aimed at exploring the gender dimension of migration for instance; Shah (1984) used the Household Economic and Demographic Survey (HED) of 1973 and found that females that migrated after 1965 were comparatively young. It was also noticed that the tendency to migrate was higher amongst divorced women compared to those women that were married. They did find a positive relationship between the rate of literacy and migration for women of all age group. Irfan (1986) analyzed Population Labor Force and Migration surveys (PLMS) of 1979 and found that although females dominated males in migration but their underlying cause of migration was marriage. When marriage is not a cause of migration, the percentage of women migrants fell from 11.8 percent to 4.8 percent. Similarly, Ahmed and Siragelden (1993) used probit estimation technique on PLMS data of 1979-80 and found that the more skilled, level of education and higher degree holder the husbands were, the more likely was the whole family's migration likely to occur. Though, the level of education not matter in case of the wife. Farooq and Cheema (2005) used sample of over three hundred households in Faisalabad (2002-03). They used Maximum Likelihood Estimation of Probit Model (MLE) and found that amongst the migrants, the major reason of migration for families was female's empowerment, health and recreational facilities. Even though, poverty was a major driver for migration, women gained empowerment and decision-making authority after migration. Also, higher level of educational opportunities in cities and exposure to modern values almost eliminated gender discrimination. Hamid (2010) analyzed the labor force surveys from 1996 to 2006 for females of age 10 and above and found the facts that marriage is the main reason that female's migration. In an intra-provincial outlook, they established the fact that female numbers exceeded males in all provinces in term of migration. The share of females amongst the migrants is not the only trend witnessed but the overall rise in families' migration has been witnessed. In a more recent research; Ahmad et, al. (2013) used Labor Force Survey of 2010-11 to statistically analyze the migrants and their characteristics. This survey was used to determine the economic and non-economic reasons' impact on migration using logistic regression. It was found that although level of education is important for both genders to migrate, but female level of education turns to be even more impactful. From the gender perspective in urban to rural migration, there has been some commendable work done in Pakistan by Farooq and Cheema (2005), Hamid (2010) and Ahmad, et, al (2013) that



its emphasis lies more on female’s migration. The level of education ranges from never been to school to having M. Phil/PhD degree. The status of the family is taken as a measure of independence, whether the female is the head of the household or not can greatly affect her decision to migrate either independently or in accompanying with family. Vocational training (voctrain ) is taken as a variable that affects both genders equally. Even though, this variable tends to be strictly towards males in a patriarchal society of Pakistan, vocational training leads to independence and can affect both genders.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Descriptive Analysis

This study used the data from the Labor Force Survey (2010-11 and 2017-18), in order to obtain an estimate of the rural to urban migration. The total number of migrants since 2010-11 has increased from 19,112 to 22,994 in 2017-18. The sample taken from the labor force survey is represented in the table below:

**Table 1** Descriptive statistics of selected males and females migrants, 2010-11 and 2017-18, Pakistan

		Migrants			Non-Migrants		
Percentages	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	
2010-11	19,112	8,614	10,498	166,421	86,850	79,571	
2017-18	22,994	10,239	12,755	168,246	86,851	81,395	
Percentages	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	
2010-11	10.30	45.07	54.93	89.70	52.19	47.81	
2017-18	12.02	44.53	55.47	87.98	51.62	48.37	

Source: Authors’ calculation using Labor Force Survey (2010-11 and 2017-18)

As per the Labor Force Survey statistic quotations, the female migrants tend to dominate males in the internal migration. From the time period of 2010-11 to 2017-18, total number of migrants has increased by about 3,882 which are of 20.31 percent. What is to be noted is that the male migrants have decreased in proportion of the total migrants in the course of 7 years. The female migrants have increased in number by 21.69 percent and the male migrants have by 18.86 percent. This trend supports the worldwide findings that females do tend to have higher migration tendencies than males do, and this migration has increased recently. From the total sample taken of labor force survey, the sample used in this study will be of the rural to urban migration. The sample taken of migrants showed that rural to urban migration tends to

outweigh the urban to urban migration. Since, the focus of this study is towards estimating the gender differences amongst urbanization trend in Pakistan, the results and analysis will focus towards rural to urban migration. Evident in the tables 2 and 3; there is a higher number and percentage of migration from the rural areas compared to the urban areas. The percentage and number of migrants from the rural areas have increased considerably over the course of the seven years. Not only the composition of the urban migrants has decreased from 43.38 to 39.24 percent, their increase in numbers is considerably small as well. The urban to urban migrants rose by 10.76 percent while the rural to urban migrants rose by 31.93 percent from 2010-11 to 2017-18.

**Table 2** Descriptive statistics of migration incidence, 2010-11 and 2017-18, Pakistan

		2010-11					
		Males		Females		Total	
		Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Rural to Urban		4,028	40.57	5,901	59.43	9,929	56.52
Urban to Urban		3,548	46.46	4,089	53.54	7,637	43.48
		2017-18					
Rural to Urban		5,174	39.50	7,925	60.50	13,099	60.76
Urban to Urban		3,856	45.58	4,603	54.42	8,459	39.24

Source: Authors’ calculation using Labor Force Survey (2010-11 and 2017-18)

Even though both males and female migrants have increased in both rural-urban and urban-urban migration, the male composition of the migrants has decreased in both types of internal migration. Females are still dominating the migration

numbers, especially amongst the rural migrants. Since, this study is interested in Urbanization which is rural to urban migration; the reasons for migration are explored only for the Rural to Urban migrants.

**Table 3** Percentage distribution regarding the Reasons (factors) for Rural to Urban migration, 2010-11 and 2017-18, Pakistan

	2010-11				2017-18			
	Economic		Non-Economic		Economic		Non-Economic	
Male	1,909	(47.39%)	2,119	(52.61%)	3,584	(35.00%)	6,655	(65.00%)
Female	131	(2.22%)	5,770	(97.78%)	291	(2.28%)	12,465	(97.72%)
<b>Total</b>	2,040	(20.55%)	7,889	(79.45%)	3,875	(16.85%)	19,120	(83.15%)

Source: Authors' calculation using Labor Force Survey (2010-11 and 2017-18)

Even though, worldwide a trend is witnessed of women migration reasons shifting towards economic ones, Pakistan's urbanization trends still brew a traditional norm. In 2010-11, both men and women tended to give preference to reasons for migration that were either family or social services related. As of 2017-18, male preference to migrate for economic reasons has declined compared to non-economic reasons. On the other hand, females have begun to migrate for economic reasons more compared to non-economic ones. In 2010-2011, female migration for economic reasons was 2.22 percent but now it is

2.28 percent in 2017-18. Even if this rise is small, it does show a pattern which echoes international findings of women participation rising in the labor force.

4.2 Empirical Analysis

For this study the focus remains to be towards studying the female migration in the urbanization trend. For this purpose, Urban to Urban areas migration observations have not been included. The Sample used in the regression analysis is shown in Table 4.

**Table 4** Percentage distribution of rural to urban migration, 2010-11 and 2017-18, Pakistan

	2010-11					
	Males		Females		Total	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Migrants	4,028	40.57	5,901	59.43	9,929	5.63
Non-Migrants	86,850	52.19	79,571	47.81	166,421	94.37
<b>Total</b>	90,878	51.53	85,472	48.47	176,350	100
	2017-18					
	Males		Females		Total	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Migrants	5,174	39.50	7,925	60.50	13,099	4.81
Non-Migrants	133,951	51.64	125,440	48.36	259,391	95.19

Source: Labor Force Survey (2010-11 and 2017-18)

Table 5 shows the results of marginal effects applied to the Probit estimation. The results indicated that both males and females tend to migrate more with Age as the coefficient is positive and significant for both years, but it also suggests that age impacts the female migration slightly more than males. This could be due to females waiting to migrate till they reach the age of marriage or prefer to migrate with their husbands. However, this effect is further explained by the Age Squared which is negative and significant for both males and females. This indicates that the migration occurs up to a certain age and then stops after that, there is most likely to be a U-shaped curve for age for both genders. It can indicate that most probably females are least likely to migrate with their children, the same goes for males. This effect on female's migration has increased in 2017-18 as compared to 2010-11. However, in 2017-18 this coefficient is found insignificant, indicating that this U-shaped relationship does not exist.

Marriage, as it is found by several studies seems to only impact women. The coefficient is positive and significant for females but is insignificant for males, which indicates that most probably males that migrate do not do so for marriage but can later marry. On the other hand, marriage is an important determinant that impacts only females. Nevertheless, it appears that more and more males are migrating to either marry in cities or so that they can get married. It can also be that males in city are preferred by females in rural areas and this causes more males to migrate in 2017-18. Similarly, status in the family, either as a head or not greatly impacts women but has no significant effect on men migrating for both time periods analyzed. It indicates that when females are responsible for a household, they are more likely to migrate to the cities, either to financially contribute to the family or take the family along for a better life. Even though, the effect of this variable has declined over the time

period taken, it does support several perceptions that females offer a better future for them and their family. aim for a lifestyle and prefer to aim to move to cities that can

**Table 5** The economic and non-economic factors of males and females migration, 2010-2011 and 2017-18, Pakistan.

Dependent Variables: Migration	2010-11		2017-18	
	Males	Females	Males	Females
Explanatory Variables	Probit Coefficients	Probit Coefficients	Probit Coefficients	Probit Coefficients
Age	0.0017 (7.37)***	0.0020 (6.57)***	0.0013 (7.08)***	0.0020 (8.36)***
Age <sup>2</sup>	-7.87e-06 (-3.09)***	-7.13e-06 (-1.99)**	-5.89e-06 (-0.25)	0.051 (27.90)***
Marital Status	0.0023 (1.01)	0.0542 (21.03)***	0.0088 (4.68)***	0.051 (27.90)***
Level of Education	0.0008 (2.86)***	0.0020 (4.75)***	0.0012 (16.24)***	0.0009 (28.22)***
Status in the Family	-0.0020 (-0.96)	0.0180 (3.82)***	0.0016 (-0.48)	0.0203 (5.87)***
Vocational Training	0.0264 (11.05)***	0.0303 (7.96)***	0.0274 (28.10)***	0.0354 (17.70)***
Chi <sup>2</sup>	1128.42***	2454.17***	1001.90***	2425.03***
Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	0.0342	0.0572	0.0248	0.0446
Constant	-2.275 (-57.93)***	-2.24 (-61.58)***	-1.97 (-67.05)***	-2.04 (-73.44)***
No. of Observations	90878	85471	97084	94149

Note: Figures in parenthesis are absolute values of z statistics, \* significant at 10 percent, \*\* at 5 percent and \*\*\* at 1 percent level.

Level of education and Vocational Training impacts both male and females positively. Level of education was impacting females more in 2010-11 than males. Nonetheless, now females' level of education does not impact their migration as compared to males in 2017-18. It could be that now females are seeking level of education in the cities and thus, less educated females are migrating more compared to males. Vocational training is an important factor of migration for both genders but more important for females in both years examined. Vocational training appeared to influence the migration of both genders much more in 2017-18.

## V. CONCLUSION AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The study focused on estimating the rural to urban migration mainly the feminine side of migration. Worldwide, the females have started to outnumber males and the same is seen in Pakistan's internal migration where females exceed males exceed significantly. The females are proportionately higher than the males in both rural to urban and urban to urban migration. The findings showed that mostly females prefer to migrate due to non-economic while males migrate for both economic and non-economic factors. Level of education and vocational training appeared as important factors to empower women and give them the independence to migrate but its impacts are more visible for woman than men's migration. Another main finding indicated that when women are charged as head of household, they are most likely to migrate than when male are heads of the household. This signified the woman vision for aiming for a better life; when she has decision making power endowed on her, she makes life

modifying decisions. However, the statistics (2017-18) also proved that males have been seen to be migrating more for marriage which is a better trend towards cultural change in prevailing orthodoxy society of Pakistan. For further policy implications, it is suggested that more focus be given towards improving level of educational and vocational facilities for females, especially in the rural areas. Offering public level of education in schools and platforms like radio and T.V broadcast may offer equal opportunities to rural women for improving gender equality.

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