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Internal Migration and Livelihood Outcomes of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Migrants in Rawalpindi and Islamabad

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ABSTRACT

Urban development and enhancement in livelihood is largely derived by internal migration in Pakistan. This study focus on how internal migration changes employment forecasts, revenue levels, access to basic facilities, social and cultural integration, and migrants' general well-being. A quantitative research design is employed in the study. A structured questionnaire was adopted to collect main data from migrants from Azad Jammu and Kashmir who were residing in Rawalpindi and Islamabad. The findings established that migration has meaningfully enhanced livelihood. About 81% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the host communities provide steady and reliable employment opportunities. Positive social and cultural integration into host communities was described by nearly 69% of migrants, demonstrating encouraging interaction, adaptability, and participation in resident social life. The joint effects of social inclusion, service access, income adequacy, and job safety are reflected in this variation. Steady employment and improved general well-being are completely correlated, according to correlation analysis, which confirms employment as a key factor in refining livelihood. Conferring to the study's conclusions, internal migration from Azad Jammu and Kashmir to Rawalpindi and Islamabad has commonly amended living conditions and assisted in the social and economic progress of urban areas. Though, the full benefits of migration are still incomplete by inequalities in skill acknowledgement, income security, and access to essential facilities. In order to assurance justifiable livelihood outcomes, the results accentuate the requirement of explicit urban policies to increase service delivery, employment quality, and social inclusion of internal migrants.

Keywords: Internal Migration, Livelihood, Urban Economy, Social Development, Social and Cultural Integration, Income, Well-being

Introduction

It has been found that for a considerable time, migration has changed societies in its social economic and cultural settings. It is a serious tool for individuals and societies to grow their status of living, follow greater economic prospects, and improve their livelihoods



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(Haas, 2021). Migration is now a dynamic element of socioeconomic transformation, mostly in developing countries, as globalization and urbanization are progressing at a high amount (Skeldon, 2022).

Executing effective policies that recommend sustainable incorporation and economic progression needs an understanding of their effects on the livelihoods of migrants as well as the complete progress of host communities. There have been prominent migratory dispositions in Azad Jammu & Kashmir (AJK), with many people migrating to cities like Rawalpindi and Islamabad in search of improved living, working, and educational projections.

On one side migration found to positively effecting individual by improving their access to the economic capitals and offering reasonable access to economic growth, but it also have some problems such as the social adjustment of individuals , un certainty about new job, and new household dynamics (Amjad et al., 2023). Exploring how migration marks these migrants' livelihood and how their rearrangement ehances the socioeconomic growth of the area of destination is therefore vital. The objective of this study is to inspect the living situations of AJK migrants living in Rawalpindi and Islamabad and to forecast the degree to which migration participate to the expansion of these cities. The study highpoints significant insights into the opportunities and difficulties these migrants confronting by examining their socioeconomic involvements Moreover, it seeks to add to the important analysis of migration.

The study will be fruit full as By connecting the gap in current literature, the outcomes of this study will be noteworthy in providing pragmatic statistics on migration dynamics specific to AJK and its effect on the urban economies of Rawalpindi and Islamabad. For the sake of refining inclusive, sustainable growth, migration reform is desirable in the limited and global landscape. (IOM, 2023)

Objectives of the Study

This research aims to obtain an answer to important questions of prime importance through scientific methods, which includes migration as a significant factor in life opportunities improvement (Hass, 2021). The key issue is examining how migration affects the livelihood of people from Azad Jammu & Kashmir that are presently living in Rawalpindi and Islamabad. These present the living conditions of these migrants and had ascertained how migrants contribute to the development of the destination areas.

Review of Literature

Through a variety of social, cultural, and economic directions, migration has a main impact on the development of the host community. In the phase of the economy, migrants enhanced productivity and economic progress by entering the labor market and holding importnat positions, regularly in industries where there is a labor shortage. In industrialized countries, immigrants increases productivity in the short and medium run, according to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) (Koczan et al., 2021).

According to a study published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (Adger et al., 2024) Moreover, immigrants commonly contribute in a range of perspectives and abilities that encourage creativity and entrepreneurship. Through social remittances and changing demographic informations, migration offers reasonable potential for enhancement, adaptation, and change. Socially, migration improves diversity and intercultural understanding by acculturating host communities' cultures. Novel ideas and practices can be inspired, and more inclusive societies can be foundt from this cultural interchange (Ferdman, 2017).



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According to the World Bank, migration has a main positive influence on poverty reduction, shared prosperity, and human development. In conclusion, by supporting economic growth, encouraging innovation, enhancing cultural landscapes, and fortifying international ties, migration serves as a catalyst for development in destination areas (Kwilinski,2024).By generating job possibilities, migration does contribute to economic progress. In terms of both social and economic disparities, it lessens them. Consequently, there was a noteworthy increase in net migration (Ahmed et al., 2025).

In developing or poor countries, people migrate from one place to another place due to fulfill subsistence need (Maharjan et al.,2017). Their socio-economic mobility is considered as a necessary condition for sustainable development and poverty alleviation (Sarkar, 2020). The economic impact on the home country due to migration encompasses various facets, including social and cultural aspects. Among these, remittances sent by migrants represent a tangible and relatively uncontroversial connection between migration and developmental effects (Gawande, 2016). Because little concerned has been made in terms of the ambitions of migrants in the country of origin and destination, there is a dire need to opt more investigations in the area (Aslany et al., 2021).

Materials and Methods

This study inspects how migration influenced the livelihoods of people from Azad Jammu & Kashmir (AJK) who live in Rawalpindi and Islamabad employing a quantitative research design. To gather primary data, a structured questionnaire was adopted. This confirmed consistency in the measurement of key variables related to socioeconomic conditions. Migrants from AJK in the twin city are part of the target population. Stratified random sampling was adopted in this study to designate various socioeconomic backgrounds. The Thomas Yemen formula for statistical reliability was employed to determine a sample size of 398 respondents. Face-to-face surveys were used to gather data on social service access, employment status, income levels, and demographics.

A pilot study was included out to further improve the questionnaire for clearness and reliability. The quantitative study that combined descriptive statistics, correlation which was generated using SPSS was opted to assess the relationship between migration and Improvements in their wellbeing. Ethical issues Informed consent was taken, and the elementary rights of privacy etc were observed in this process.

Results and Discussion

The livelihood situations and well-being of emigrants in host communities are shaped by a number of aspects, including employment situations, social cohesion, and opportunity to better living, health, and educational chances. Strategies that will advance the successful integration and well-being of migrants must take these important aspects into consideration.

Table: 4.1 Distribution of the respondents based on livelihood and well-being in the host community

| Livelihood | Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|------------|----------------|-------|---------|----------|-------------------|
|------------|----------------|-------|---------|----------|-------------------|



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|--|--------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Migrants in the host community have access to stable and reliable employment opportunities | 198 50.5% | 120 30.7% | 9 1.8% | 50 12.0% | 21 4.9% |
| Overall income levels of migrants in the host community is satisfactory | 175 43.0% | 112 28.6% | 26 6.3% | 45 11.7% | 40 10.4% |
| Migrants in the host community have adequate access to essential services such as healthcare and education | 97 23.7% | 79 20.1% | 54 13.0% | 77 19.5% | 91 23.7% |
| Migrants in the host community able to integrate socially and culturally into the local community | 172 42.2% | 106 27.1% | 26 6.3% | 61 15.9% | 33 8.6% |
| The overall well-being and quality of life of migrants in the host community is good | 122 29.2% | 98 25.5% | 37 9.1% | 87 22.1% | 54 14.1% |

Conferring to the social development model in the theoretical framework, if there are chances in the community, each migrant can practice their skills and potential to make a transformation that will advance both their own and the community's quality of life (Midgley, 1995).

Analyzing the responses regarding access to stable and reliable employment opportunities, a sizable 81.2% (50.5% strongly agree and 30.7% agree) of respondents express positive sentiments. However, 13.8% (12.0% disagree and 1.8% strongly disagree) indicate uncertainties about the stability and reliability of employment opportunities in the host community. This suggests that while the majority perceive favorable employment conditions, a notable proportion holds concerns in this regard. Whereas 1.8% remain neutral with the statement.

As discussed by the social development model in the theoretical framework, if opportunities are available in the community, then the individual migrants can utilize their skills and potential for making a reliable change for better living of themselves as well as the community (Midgley, 1995). As per the sustainable livelihood models presented in the theoretical models, the livelihood conditions are influenced by various basic elements such as the social and economic capital. Individuals having reasonable financial resources in the host community are found to be comfortable. Migrants having social capital, such as social contacts and networks found to be helpful for their livelihood (Harris and Halpern, 2022).

Concerning the overall income levels of migrants in the host community, 71.6% (43.0% strongly agree and 28.6% agree) express satisfaction. Nevertheless, 22.1% (11.7% disagree and 10.4% strongly disagree) indicate dissatisfaction with income levels, emphasizing a significant proportion of respondents with concerns about their financial situation. Whereas 6.3% remain neutral with the statement.



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In other crucial elements, such as healthcare and education, opinions are more varied. While 43.8% (23.7% strongly agree and 20.1% agree) express satisfaction, a noteworthy 43.2% (23.7% disagree and 19.5% strongly disagree) report concerns about the adequacy of essential services. This suggests a divided perspective on the availability and accessibility of crucial services in the host community. Whereas 13.0% remain neutral with the statement.

Gaviola (2020) determined that social networks are an important part of making a better livelihood and well-being of the migrants. Being social enables the migrants to gain the required emotional support, information, and access to resources, which is direly needed for the migrants to navigate their new social settings. Durable social connections can be helpful in acquiring reasonable jobs and social integration in the new social environment. Regarding social and cultural integration, a majority of 69.3% (42.2% strongly agree and 27.1% agree) feel migrants in the host community can integrate well. However, 24.8% (15.9% disagree and 8.6% strongly disagree) express reservations, indicating a segment of the population that perceives challenges in achieving social and cultural integration.

Whereas 6.3% remain neutral with the statement. Finally, opinions on the overall well-being and quality of life of migrants in the host community are diverse. While 54.7% (29.2% strongly agree and 25.5% agree) express positive views, 31.2% (22.1% disagree and 9.1% strongly disagree) hold a more suspicious outlook, highlighting concerns about the overall well-being and quality of life in the host community. Whereas 9.1% remain neutral with the statement.

It was concluded that the livelihood and well-being of migrants are affected by factors such as better income opportunities, social integration, access to required social services, housing conditions, and cultural adaptations. There is a need to make suitable policies and programs that will enhance the required social integration, protect migrants' rights, and provide the required support for migrants to live comfortably in the new settings (Kuschminder & Koser, 2017).

Table 4.2: Distributions of the respondents regarding the contribution of migrants

| Contribution | Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|---|----------------|--------------|-----------|-------------|-------------------|
| Migrants bring valuable skills and expertise to the workforce | 140 33.9% | 169 43.5% | 0 0.0% | 52 13.5% | 35 9.1% |
| Migrants enhance the local economy through their entrepreneurial activities | 227 56.6% | 145 37.2% | 0 0.0% | 14 3.1% | 12 3.1% |
| Migrants actively participated in community development initiatives | 204 50.5% | 120 30.7% | 7 1.8% | 48 12.0% | 19 4.9% |



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|---|--------------|--------------|-------------|------------|-------------|
| migrants contributed to the enrichment of cultural exchange and understanding | 157 38.3% | 169 43.5% | 47 11.7% | 9 2.3% | 16 4.2% |
| Migrants played a role in filling labor gaps and job vacancies | 182 44.8% | 120 30.7% | 32 7.8% | 14 3.6% | 50 13.0% |
| Migrants helped in diversifying perspectives and ideas | 165 41.9% | 197 48.7% | 36 9.4% | 0 0.0% | 0 0.0% |

There is enhancement in the workforce of the host community due to the effective and potential addition of migrant workers because those migrants are carrying valuable skills, experience and expertise with Migrants play a significant role in enhancing the workforce of host communities by bringing valuable skills, expertise, with diverse viewpoints.

Table 4.22 provides insights into respondents' opinions on the various ways migrants contribute to the host community, including workforce skills, economic impact, community development initiatives, cultural enrichment, labor market contributions, and diversification of perspectives.

Analyzing responses regarding the belief that migrants bring valuable skills and expertise to the workforce, 77.4% (33.9% strongly agree and 43.5% agree) express positive views. A smaller proportion, 22.6% (13.5% disagree and 9.1% strongly disagree), indicates some reservations or disagreement about the contribution of migrants to the workforce.

The study of Burchardi et al. (2020) illustrates that there is a positive correlation between immigration and invention in the United States. Migrants are fulfilling the demand in various sectors of the host community, such as agriculture, healthcare, and hospitality, where there is a crucial need for such workers to fill the labor gap.

Concerning the perception that migrants enhance the local economy through entrepreneurial activities, a significant 93.8% (56.6% strongly agree and 37.2% agree) express positive views. A small proportion, 6.2% (3.1% disagree and 3.1% strongly disagree), indicates some reservations or disagreement about the economic impact of migrants' entrepreneurial activities. New technologies and practices by the presence of skilled migrants in the workforce and they also transfer their skills to the locals through on-the-job training and experience. This exchange of knowledge and practices is fruitful as the productivity and efficiency of different sectors will strengthen (Le and Pham, 2022).

These findings were confirmed from the literature that migrants are filling jobs as per the required skills and experience as compare to the native individuals, by having less skills and expertise. Precisely, the study directs that migrants fill multiple labor gaps, such low and high skills. For example, 16% of healthcare specialists in the U.S. are foreign-born, emphasizing the precarious part of migrants in sustaining crucial facilities (Skeldon, 2022).

Regarding the belief that migrants actively participate in community development initiatives, 81.2% (50.5% strongly agree and 30.7% agree) express positive views. A smaller proportion, 18.8% (12.0% disagree and 6.9% strongly disagree), indicates some



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reservations or disagreement about migrants’ active involvement in community development initiatives. Whereas 1.8% of the respondents remained neutral with the statement.

Similar account has been demonstrated in the study of Quak, (2019) there is 9-18% rise in patents per capita income due to 1% increase in college educated migrants in the host community in US. The potential and skillful migrants are found to be contributed significantly in knowledge transfer, developing the host community economically and technologically. In terms of the belief that migrants contribute to the enrichment of cultural exchange and understanding, a majority of 81.8% (38.3% strongly agree and 43.5% agree) express positive views. A smaller proportion, 17.2% (11.7% disagree and 5.9% strongly disagree), indicates some reservations or disagreement about the cultural contribution of migrants.

Whereas 11.7% of the respondents remained neutral with the statement. Regarding the belief that migrants play a role in filling labor gaps and job vacancies, 75.5% (44.8% strongly agree and 30.7% agree) express positive views. A smaller proportion, 24.5% (13.0% disagree and 11.4% strongly disagree), indicates some reservations or disagreement about the role of migrants in filling labor gaps. A report by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (2017) highlighted Migrants participate in community development initiatives such as elevating the cultural landscape of the host community. migrants participate actively in different cultural events in host community thereby promoting multiculturalism and mutual understanding

Whereas 7.8% of the respondents remained neutral with the statement. In terms of the belief that migrants help in diversifying perspectives and ideas, a significant 90.6% (41.9% strongly agree and 48.7% agree) express positive views. None of the respondent’s express reservations or disagreement about the diversification of perspectives and ideas by migrants. Whereas 9.4% of the respondents remained neutral with the statement.

Table: 4.3 Pearson’s r correlation between independent variable and duration of migration and language proficiency

| | | Duration migration | Language Proficiency |
|----------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Duration migration | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .219** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .000 |
| | N | 398 | 398 |
| Language Proficiency | Pearson Correlation | .219** | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | |
| | N | 398 | 398 |

The correlation analysis between the duration of migration and language proficiency among migrants from Azad Jammu & Kashmir residing in Rawalpindi and Islamabad reveals a statistically significant positive relationship. The Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.219 indicates a weak but meaningful positive association between the two variables. This suggests that as the duration of migration increases, language proficiency tends to improve. The p-value of 0.000 approves that this relationship is statistically significant at the 1% level, showing there is reasonable proof that the observed correlation is not due to random chance.

These results propose that extended stays in the host community improves language



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procurement, which could be attributed to enlarged exposure to the resident language, social interactions, and workplace interaction. Though, the relatively weak correlation designates that other features, such as educational background, social capital, and opportunity to language learning resources, may also effect language proficiency.

This perception underlines the importance of targeted language support programs for recent migrants to speed up their integration process. Policymakers and community organizations could advance language training initiatives, mainly for newcomers, to help them overcome linguistic blocks and improve their social and economic inclusion in the host community.

Conclusion

The research concluded that migration has had a noteworthy influence on the livelihood of people from Azad Jammu & Kashmir residing in Rawalpindi and Islamabad. A substantial number of migrants responded that they had secured employment, although income satisfaction remained a concern for most. Migrants significantly affect the local economy, especially entrepreneurial contributions, with highly valued skills for workforce improvement. However, some are not easily allowed to exercise their skills and be integrated fully into the workforce.

Since many migrants participate in local initiatives and have an impact on the community, they are also crucial for social innovation and intercultural communication. Despite the apparent success of cultural integration, some migrants face social obstacles. Given that a sizable percentage of respondents say they have inadequate access to essential services like healthcare and education, the availability of these services remains a significant issue.

In spite of these obstacles, migration has increased economic prospects for raising living standards. Inadequate well-being, service accessibility, or income stability point to the need for suitable migration strategies. Therefore, ensuring the most advantageous use of migration for greater inclusion in the community at large would be the main goal.

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