

Migration and Brokers: A Ray of Hope for Socio-economically Devastated Families in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan

Nasar Khan¹, Dr. Arab Naz^{2*}, Bahadar Ali³, Zakir Hussain⁴, Nasim Khan⁵, Aurangzeb⁶

¹Visiting Lecturer, Department of Sociology University of Malakand Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

²Associate Professor and Chairman, Department of Sociology, University of Malakand, Pakistan

³Lecturer Department of Law, University Malakand

⁴Visiting Lecturer department of Social Work University of Malakand

⁵Lecturer, Department of Sociology AIOU Islamabad

⁶Teacher at University Public School University of Malakand Pakistan

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ABSTRACT

Brokers or mediators play a pivotal role in facilitation of migration to Middle East (Halba, 2009). The role of brokers, however in many cases provide support to economically disadvantaged families. This study has been conducted in Khayber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan, where most of migrants have been supported by brokers to move abroad without taking visa payment in advance. Such migrants not only pay the amount of fee for visa but are also supporting their families at home. The current study thus has explored the brokerage mechanism in District Dir Lower, Khyber Pakhtunkwah, Pakistan. The study has focused on the socio-economic development of such families being supported by migrants through brokerage mechanism. The field data has been collected from 54 migrants families (out of 74 identified households who were send by brokers through a survey) using purposive sampling mechanism in Union Council Ouch, Tehsil Adenzai Lower Dir District. The information has been obtained through an interview guide, which were analyzed in the form of thematic analysis under qualitative research design. Findings of the study are conceptualized in two ways; firstly, brokers play a pivotal role in helping poor people for migration to Middle East without paying in advance; secondly, migrants payback the visa expenses as well as support their families which leads to familial socio-economic development.

KEYWORDS: Migration, Broker, Remittance, Family, Development

1.1. INTRODUCTION

National and international migration is an integral aspect of modern economic system. Increase in flow of national and international migration is associated with the reduction in poverty and increase in level of development in many important social spheres such as families, development in the origin and destination areas along with national economies (Siddiqui, 2012; Zohry, 2007). Few decades ago, Georg Simmel introduced a term *tertiusgaudens* which means “the third party” referring to broker or arbitrator (Simmel, 1992). Broker include in one of the preeminent components related to migration, specifically while considering increase in flow of national and international migration. For instance, Halba (2009) is of the view that brokers increase the flow of migration from South Asia to Middle East. Brokerage is a kind of social mechanism, for example, it is connectivity between persons and groups as well as firms to hire work force. The firms establish contacts with brokers while brokers contact with labor to support the firm (Rossi, 2008). International migration provides supports in to families in less developed countries (Taylor, 2006). In the context of South Asia, majority of migrants are poor or belongs to poor strata of the population (UNDP 2009). Migration for such disadvantaged strata is a great source of reducing poverty i.e. in Asia and Africa, migration increases the flow of remittances, which ultimately provide economic support for betterment in health and education. Research on migration from Asia, Africa and Latin America indicates that increase in migration level reduces poverty at regional as well as national level. Migration enables families to cope with financial management of households and increases the level of income (Siddiqui, 2012).

Previous studies indicate that migration brings familial development by increasing household income (Siddiqui, 2012). For example, migration brings familial development through increase in employment opportunities, supporting livelihood, increase in income of families (Siddiqui, 2012; Afsar, 2009; Kwankye and Anarfi, 2011) etc. According to Taylor, (2006) migrants are the sources of reward remittances far beyond what family members could earn at the country of origin. A household panel survey carried out in Nepal reveals that Nepalese migrants in Middle Eastern countries were earning 7.4 times higher than the average monthly income in Nepal and migrants to other countries (The World Bank, 2011). Even internal migrants were also able to earn

*Corresponding Author: Dr. Arab Naz, Associate Professor and Chairman, Department of Sociology, University of Malakand, Pakistan (arab_naz@yahoo.com)

more than non-migrants as noted by Billah (2011) and Srivastava *et al.*, (2011), internal migrants earn 7.61 per cent more than non-migrants.

The assumption that migration reduces familial poverty has been debated in many research studies with contradictory results. However, in specific relevance to the current study; research studies have indicated that migration reduces poverty levels at a familial basis *i.e.* Adams and Page (2005) have reviewed a plethora of data from 71 states regarding the association between migration and poverty levels; and, concluded that a 10 per cent increase in remittances leads to a decrease in 3.5 per cent of poverty level. The argument that migration reduces poverty is further supported by a household survey conducted by Taylor *et al.*, (2005) revealing that an increase in migration is associated with a reduction in poverty. In addition, the mentioned argument is also supported by other studies including Siddiqui (2012), Middle East Institute Viewpoints (2010), Harigaya (2007), Zohry (2007), Global Commission on International Migration (2005). Further, many research studies, for example, Zohry (2007), Taylor (2006) and Lacroix (2011) reveal that a reduction in poverty as a result of migration is linked with an increase in access to better educational and health facilities.

1.2. Argument of the Study

Labor migration and remittances are prominent livelihood strategies in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. Statistics indicate that 30-40 per cent of families receive remittances from members migrated to the Middle East. These remittances are utilized for numerous purposes including education, health, transportation, savings as well as investment in small-scale local businesses. Labor migration and remittances received are thus sources of livelihood and development in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan (Steimann, 2005). Literature explains positive as well as non-positive aspects of migration and related concepts and processes. However, in the context of brokerage, there is no specific work available or conducted by researchers. Most of the studies have been focusing on information related to fraud, corruption and violation of rights occurring during the mechanism of brokerage. However, the current study has been thus organized to analyze the positive aspects of the role of brokers in the facilitation of migrants. It has been observed that in many cases, brokers invest their own money to migrate poor people to the Middle East who cannot afford to pay in advance the expenses of migration *i.e.* visa payment, ticket *etc.* The brokers are responsible for providing employment to migrated persons as they invest their own money which is further associated with fewer chances of visa and employment frauds. In return, migrants after employment pay some amount back to brokers as well as support their families. The current research activity is an effort to highlight such a mechanism in brokerage and to explore the positive aspects of brokerage mechanism in the study area.

1.3. Objectives of the Study

- To explore the role of brokers in helping poor people to migrate to the Middle East
- To assess the role of migrants through brokers in supporting families and bringing development

1.4. METHODOLOGY

Methodology is a process of how a social scientist finds out (Babbie, 2012) is the most important aspect in any research activity. In this connection, the current research activity follows specific qualitative methodology, which is a type of research based on investigation and presenting information in textual form (Nueman, 2006). Further, the current study is specifically based on thematic analysis, which is a type of qualitative research in which a comprehensive literature is reviewed and a highly relevant literature is selected in accordance to the issue. In the next step, field information is collected and such information is thus linked with literature to extract findings (Thomas and Harden, 2012). Adopting this approach, related literature has been reviewed regarding migration, its impacts; and the role of brokers in recruiting migrants for the Middle East. Further, for the collection of field data, sampling has been performed in multiple stages. In the very first stage, the identification of respondents has been performed through a household survey which was carried out in village Ouch, Tehsil Adenzai, Lower Dir District and a total of 74 such migrants were identified who have not paid in advance visa price to brokers. In the second stage, 54 migrants were selected purposively and they were interviewed thoroughly through an interview guide. It is also important to mention that rests of 20 identified migrants were inaccessible due to many reasons *i.e.* they were out of home or still on work in the Middle East at the time of data collection. The collected data has also been analyzed in two ways *i.e.* the personal and demographic data has been presented in the form of tables and frequency while the thematic information has been transcribed, narrated and compared with the literature and findings were extracted for generalization. Besides, to hide the actual names of the respondents, pseudo names have been utilized for ethical consideration.

1.5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1.5.1. Socio-Economic Profile of Respondents

1.5.2. Age wise Distribution of Respondents

Age of the respondents is significant aspect in the current research activity as it can determine the physique, stamina and efforts of migrants to do labor and earn money. Keeping in view such significance, the following table contains age wise distribution of respondents:

Table No. 01: Age of the Respondents

Age of Respondents	Frequency	Percentage
20-30 years	09	16.66
31-40 years	28	51.85
41-50 years	12	22.22
51 and above years	05	9.25
Total	54	100

Source: interviews from respondents

The above table shows that majority of respondents i.e. 28 (51.85 %) respondents were in age category of 31-40 years while 12 (22.22 %) respondents were in age category of 41-50 years. Such an age is suitable for earning and related activities. Further, less however an important portion of respondents i.e. 9 (16.66 %) and 5 (9.25 %) of respondents belonged to age categories of 20-30 years and 51 and above years respectively.

1.5.3. Income Level of Respondents

Income level of respondents is an important variable while considering the theme of this research activity. Migration provides impetus to income of the migrants in particular in case of migration for availing job (Zohry, 2007; UNDP, 2009). Keeping in view the significance of migration in enhancing the income level of migrants, the tabular information shows the income level of respondents before and after.

Table No. 02: Income Level of Respondents

Income of Respondents	Frequency	Percentage
	<i>Before migration</i>	
1000-10,000	13	24.07
11,000-20,000	17	31.48
21,000-30,000	12	22.22
31,000-40,000	10	18.51
41,000 and above	02	3.70
Total	54	
	<i>After Migration</i>	
1000-10,000	01	1.85
11,000-20,000	04	7.40
21,000-30,000	07	12.96
31,000-40,000	18	33.33
41,000 and above	24	44.44
	54	100

Source: information obtained through field interviews

The above tabular information indicates that migration leads to increase in the income of migrants, for example, there is an increase in percentage of respondents in categories of higher income after migration as compared to before migration. In explanation, higher number or percentage of respondents were earning in lower levels of income before migration while higher number or percentage of respondents are present in higher income categories after migration which suggests that migration enhanced the income of respondents.

1.5.4. Thematic Analysis

1.5.5. Brokerage and Migration

Brokers or mediators play a pivotal role in migration to Middle East (Halba, 2009). Brokerage is the source of stimulating labor migration, for example, migration to Malaysia and Saudi Arabia during 1980s and onward is the outcome of brokerage (Span, 1994). The sampled individuals (54) also agreed that brokerage plays an important role in migrating labor to Middle East. The respondents themselves as well as many of their friends were helped by brokers to migrate from Pakistan to Arab countries. For instance, an extract from an interview is:

“...off course, in our area brokers help is the major source of migration to Saudi and Dubai...” (Azhar Khan).

“...before the brokers assistance, migration was not so easy...”(Gul Nawaz).

Literature enumerates that brokers are important especially for poor people and those who needs employment. Brokers have a wide range of links to provide people with employment opportunities; and, most importantly engagement in work immediately after migration (Faist, 2014). In this respect, field information show a high resemblance to the said argument, for example, one of the respondents during an interview stated that:

“...Saeed Gul (the broker) helped me to migrate to Dubai and due to his help I started working within a month after migration....” (Said Nawaz).

Another respondent in a similar context argued that:

“...me and my family members were in trouble due to economic hardships. Broker helped me to migrate and start working immediately....”(Qasim Khan).

Brokerage is important in many ways, for example, firms and companies provide brokers with information regarding job vacancies as well as financial dealing. Brokers in return provide them with labor force and in this mechanism both the firms, brokers and migrants are benefited. For example, brokers invest their own money in migrating labor force and with some extra cost while the migrants return their investment with the passage of time. Thus, the firm gets labor force; brokers are benefited by their investment and the migrant avail employment (Therborn, 2006). In a similar context, field information shows that the mechanism of brokerage is beneficial to them as well as to the brokers. In this context, respondents argued that their migration was possible due to brokers. Please refer to the following extract from an interview:

“...me as well as many of my friends are in Saudia due to the assistance of brokers....”(Zahid Hussain).

Brokers are often well experienced in tackling transfer of documentations and process involved in process of migration. This is an important task, for example, brokers can help the migrants to cut down transaction costs. Transaction costs include visa to cross national borders, adapting to the new country upon arrival as well as finding housing and work. In other words, brokers assist the migrants’ to settle in the country of destination (Falleti-Lynch, 2009). In this connection, field information reveals that local brokers assist fresh migrants to settle in the country of destination, for instance, it is evident from interviews that brokers exert their efforts to provide fresh migrants with housing and with an early employment (primarily because they invest their own and an early employment will ensure an early pay back of their invested money). Further, migrants also said that brokers can help in reducing visa and ticket costs as they have contacts with firms at place of destination. In this context, few of the extracts from interviews are:

“...Sharifullah (the broker) helped me to settle immediately in Dubai. I was also able to get a job within a month after migration in firm where Sharifullah had contacts....” (Saeed Bacha)

“...an early employment ensures an early payback to the broker; thus, they are keen to provide us with employment and assistance....”(Azhar Khan)

Perhaps the most important aspect related to brokerage is socio-economic abuse of the migrants. In this connection, for instance, it is evident that international migration can be a risky business whereby smuggling, money laundering and abuses are common in particular for poorest migrants who are most at the risk of exploitation at the hands of brokers. In addition, loan taking are common among poor migrants, however, in case of failing to remit creates more problems for such families (Taylor, 2006). On the contrary, findings of this research activity provide us with different results. For example, none of the respondents was exploited at the hands of brokers. When asked about such smooth pattern of migration respondents answered that brokers in the area invest their own money to migrate them; thus, they have proper contacts with firms and their employment and adjustment is ensured in advance.

The discussion concludes that brokers play pivotal role in migration. It is a mechanism in which firms are in contact with certain individual to get labor force. The brokers invest their own money and help the poor labor to migrate. Migrants return the broker’s money with some amount of interest as well as support their families financially. Besides, it is also evident that brokers assist migrants to settle and find an early work at the country of destination as it will ensure the return of their invested money.

1.5.6. Migration and Familial Development

Literature and studies indicates that migration brings about familial development. In this connection, even a relatively long past research by Caldwell (1969) has identified remittance as a major source of familial development. Remittance refers to the money sent by migrants to families and friends (Zohry, 2007; World Bank, 2006). Further, according to Brink (1991) and Eurostat (2000) remittances also include items sent by migrants to home such as clothes and electronics appliances. Field information enumerates that migration is a source of familial development through remittances and appliances. In this regard, an extract from an interview is:

“...we earn money and send majority of the earning to home....”(Zahid Hussain).

Another respondent argued that:

"...yes, sending appliances, cosmetics and other daily life things to family and relatives is a sort of culture now...." (Muhammad Ali).

Familial development as a result of migration can be explained in many important ways. In this context, literature shows that migration results in better living conditions for those who are left behind (Skeldon, 1997). For instance, remittances received by families from migrants enable the families to avail household daily expenses with ease such as food, clothing as well as health care (Zohry, 2005). In a similar context, field information indicates quite similar results to the mentioned literature. For example, majority of the respondents asserted that money which they transfer (remittances) to family left behind enables them to avail daily life expenses easily as compared to before their migration. One of the respondents during his interview stated that:

"....off course, we were facing so many difficulties while dealing with familial expenses before migration; however, after my migration Alhamdulillah, all the financial difficulties are well managed now...."(Sultan-i-Room).

In addition, literature indicates a crucial phenomenon relating to families receiving remittances is investment or reinvestments. It is evident from many studies that remittances receiving families invests the money resulting in more profit. Further, the amount of investment depends on remittances received; however, profit is obvious in case of investment (Eurostat, 2000). Major investment fields include small-scale businesses, banks and transportation (Nassar, 2005). Field information in this regard shows a significant resemblance to the literature. Majority of respondents argued that their families have invested money received through remittances. For example, one of the respondents argued that:

"....i remit about 70 % of my income to home. My wife has saved about 6 lac in two years and I reinvested it with a cement dealer. The dealer now gives me 8-11 thousand per month...." (Saeed Khan).

Besides, another respondent stated that:

"....i saved about 11 lac rupees and invested it. Currently, I do not send money to home as the investment is providing them with enough income...." (Ahmad Hayat).

Migration and remittances are associated with food and level of food security of any family preferably in positive way. For instance, Lacroix (2011) argues that migration improves household food security. Remittances received as a result of migration enable left behind families to consume quality food as well as reduces the stress regarding food security. Similarly, field information shows resemblance to the argument that remittances received as a result of migration leads decrease in stress regarding arranging food for family (increase in level of food security) along with enabling left behind families to consume quality food, for example, an extract from an interview states:

"....off course, there is decrease in anxiety regarding arranging food for family as I am earning enough to remit and make happy my family..."(Zar Gul).

Literature on migration reveals that families with migrants in Middle East states are able to provide better education to their children. In this context, remittances increase educational opportunities. In explanation, remittances are associated with relaxing household budget and enable the families to provide their children with better education (Acosta, 2006). Field information also reveals that migration increases educational opportunities for children left behind. Majority if the respondents viewed that due to increase in their income, they are able to provide their children with quality education. For instance, an extract from an interview is:

"...I transferred my children to private school after two years of migration in order to provide them with standard education..."

In another interview, a respondent stated that:

"...working in Saudia increased my income which made me able to easily fulfil the educational needs of my children such as books, fee etc..." (ZarGul).

Thus, it is evident from the discussion that migration enables parents or families to provide their children with better education prior to migration. Migration increases familial income leading to increase in chances of availing education.

Health is one of the important indicators for development. With regard to migration, research shows contradictory results such as some studies conclude that migration is associated with poor health among the left behind families while some studies show that migration improves health condition of left behind (Rossi, 2008). In this regard, information indicates that migration increases incomes which allow the families to have hygienic food, better flushing and to visit doctor frequently even in case of minor illness (Brockhoff, 1990; Rossi, 2008). In this context, majority of respondents supported the argument that migration leads to better health of families left behind. In explanation, respondents asserted that their families avail much better health facilities as a result of migration; and, stated that their earning increased net family income enabling the families to avail better health facilities. For instance, an extract from an interview is:

"....i told my family to visit a specialized doctor in case of illness as my income in Saudia is enough to avail such facility...." (Zakirullah).

On another occasion, a respondent stated that:

"....definitely, now my family consumes much better quality food prior to my migration...." (ZarGul).

Thus, it is conclusive from literature as well as field information that migration leads to better health. For instance, migration increases income level of family which allow the members to visit frequently to doctor, makes them able to avail better flushing and hygienic food.

1.5.7. DISCUSSION

Studies enumerate that migration through brokers i.e. to Middle East and other countries have added the formation of human capital. Analyzing the information obtained from various sources indicate that remittances from migration through brokers are spend for economic uplift of the family i.e. spent on education and health, everyday consumption as well as children education. A large amount of the remittances is spent on consumption while the children of international migrants are more likely to finish their education as the improved income from remittances provides them with the extra financial resources. Further, better vision linked with migration influence social norms and incentives towards attaining more education as compared to non-migrants. The facts from the field data and thematic data provide an increase in school enrolment, income level of the families, higher consumption of food, health facilitation as well social and economic development of the migrants. In this context, migration through brokers not only positively affects the households but also the regional development to a greater extent.

1.8. Conclusion

Findings of the study enumerates that migration is an important global process. Being a process migration involves many mechanisms where brokerage is one of such mechanisms. For example, in such a mechanism firms develop contacts with particular individuals who in return have contacts with individuals in need of employment. Thus, through this mechanism firms get labor force, brokers are benefited while unemployed avails employment. The mechanism of brokerage has many positive impacts in the study area; first, brokers help the poor people to migrate to Middle East.

The results of the study highlight that migration through brokers has multi-faceted impacts on families' economic and social development. In this regard, the information asserts that migration affects individuals' lives, family income and economic development while it reduces the ratio of poverty to a maximum extent. The information indicate that majority of the people living abroad through brokers visa are sending remittances to country of residences which has brought a shift in their social as well as economic aspects of life. With respect to poverty reduction, migration and remittances have significant contribution in reducing family poverty and increase expenditures. Similarly, family expenditure upon food, cloths, health and other related aspects has become enormous, which has ultimately influenced the life style of the people. Similarly, the study reflects that migration through brokers also imposes changes in the role of family members as well as migrants. Most of the people were of the view that remittances sent by migrants have improved access to goods and services i.e. market, health, education, food, and even recreation in the area. Besides, remittances received by families have enormously increased health facilitation, investment and family well-being to a larger extent. Similarly, information also indicate that family well-being in relation to health facilitation, construction, buying agriculture land, establishment of market, bank accounts and property dealing etc. has been found rapid among such families. Thus, brokers are playing a positive role in facilitation of migration and familial development of the area.

1.9. Recommendations

- 1) Migration through brokers and remittances have increased family facilitation regarding education however, the moral aspects of the children has been affected to a level, which need proper consideration.
- 2) Absence of the parents leads to lower social control and it has been a matter of concern for migrant's families. Thus, at least such houses must be headed to another member before leaving the home.
- 3) Dependants of the migrants mostly suffer from emotional exclusion and male members should avoid longer duration outside the home.

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