

# **The Impact of Remittances on the Women's Empowerment: A Case Study of Gujrat**



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**Thesis submitted for the partial fulfillment of the Degree of Masters of  
Philosophy in Development Studies.**

**Department of Development Studies,  
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**2020**



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## CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that this thesis entitled: “*The Impact of Remittances on the Women’s Empowerment: A Case Study of Gujrat*” submitted by Ms. Sundas Ayyub is accepted in its present form by the Department of Development Studies, Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE), Islamabad as satisfying the requirements for partial fulfillment of the degree in Master of Philosophy in Development Studies.

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Date of Examination: April 10, 2020

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

This thesis was made possible to complete by the supreme mercy of the Allah Almighty. I am highly thankful to my supervisor Dr. Zulfiqar Ali, Head Department of Development Studies for his kind support throughout my academic stay and especially the enlightened guidance during my research work and thesis write-up.

I am also thankful to my family and friends for their wishes to complete this research task and especial thanks goes to my husband Dr. Sarfraz Khan, Assistant Professor Department of Sociology at Quaid-i-Azam University Islamabad for the continued encouragement to complete my degree.

I am indebted to the respondents who allowed me to take their lengthy interviews and for explaining the lived experiences they have gone through in front of me. I am also obliged to my respected class mates whose encouragement made it possible for me to complete my thesis work.

## ABSTRACT

*The current study aimed to understand the impact of international migration on the women's empowerment in the left behind families in Gujrat city. Gujrat is one of the leading districts with the large number of male out-migrant to various destinations across the world. Most of the Gujratis are living in Middle East, Europe, USA and Canada. But there are few number of Gujrati diaspora in other regions across world. For the current research two key informant interviews (KIIs) were selected from the Marghazar Colony in Gujrat city. At 1st stage these KIIs helped the researcher in grasping the situations faced by women and lead it to interact with required respondents from various families known to them. At the second stage two focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted with female respondents to further comprehend understandings about this issue under investigation. At the third stage of the research twenty female respondents were sampled (ten from the joint and equal number from nuclear families) and they were asked about number of issues through the use of in-depth interview guide. The responses were recorded and coding was done to generate themes. Gendered Geographies of Power and Women's Empowerment conceptual frameworks were used for the current study. The major findings of the research were grouped in two separated groups as the research found out the contrasting effects of out-migration on the life of women in the left behind families. The autonomy of such women who were living in a nuclear family was intact as they were not only having control over the resources but they were in better position to decide about the several issues in their family. In contrast to that the women in joint families were depending on the male members and their say in all affairs was not weighted equally.*

**Keywords:** Family System, Gujrat, International Migration, Pakistan, Remittances, Women's Autonomy, Women's Empowerment

## Table of Content

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT .....	i
ABSTRACT.....	iii
Table of Content .....	iv
Chapter 1.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.v</b>
1. Introduction.....	1
1.1. Statement of the Problem.....	7
1.2. Research Problem .....	8
1.3. Research Questions.....	8
1.4. Objectives of the Research.....	9
1.5. Significance of the Research.....	10
1.6. Explanation of the Key Terms/Concepts .....	10
Chapter 2.....	14
2. Review of Literature .....	14
2.1 Causes of Migration.....	15
2.2 Migration and Development .....	16
2.3 Remittances and its' types .....	17
2.4 Positionality of men and women in migration.....	17
2.5 Contextualization of women empowerment in Third world.....	18
2.6. International Migration, facts and figure .....	19
2.7. Role of Kinship in International Migration.....	22
2.8. Remittances Receiver in Left behind Family of migrants .....	23
2.9. The Role of Remittances in Left behind Family of Migrant.....	24
2.10. How Remittances Empowered Women in decision making in Left behind Family .....	25
2.11. Impact of Remittances on children left behind .....	29
2.12. Remittances and changing pattern in women health.....	30
2.13 Role of remittances in women empowerment in Pakistan.....	33
Chapter 3.....	38

3. Methods and Methodology .....	38
3.1. Research Design.....	38
3.2. Locale.....	38
3.3. Units of Data Collection .....	39
3.4. Methods of Data Collection .....	39
3.5. Sampling Technique .....	40
3.6. Sample Size.....	41
3.7. Data Analysis .....	41
3.8. Ethical consideration.....	41
Chapter 4.....	43
4. Conceptual Framework.....	43
Chapter 5.....	46
5. Findings and Discussion .....	46
5.1. Reasons behind Male Migration .....	46
5.2. International Migration, Remittances and Women in Left behind Families.....	48
5.3. Remittances Reception and Utilization Patterns: A Gender Lens .....	51
5.4. Contesting Women’s Empowerment in the Left behind Families .....	56
Chapter 6.....	60
6. Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations .....	60
6.1. Summary and Conclusion .....	60
6.2. Recommendations.....	62
References.....	64
Interview Guide .....	79

## **Chapter No.1**

### **1. Introduction**

On a scale of most impactful phenomenon of Globalization, migration tops the chart by reorienting the lives of people who migrate, the societies they migrate into and the societies they migrate from. The migration in an operationalized context allude to movement of people outside their territorial zone. When the concept of nation state surfaced, the definition of territorial zone was reconstructed with defining borders through sketching fences. This marked the confinement on movement of people by keeping records of migrants and systematically processing the socio-economic lives of migrants. The systematic mobilization of people from one nation to other has been observed with the preponderance of development notion among nations. The nexus of migration and economic development engendered greater outflow of foreign currencies from the migrants to their native areas (Sriskandarajah, 2005).

But why do people even migrate? Ample theories of migration have addressed this question by elucidating the reasons and consequences of migration on societies and people involved in migration process. Push and pull theory is most adequately and unanimously defined theory of migration which asserted that people migrate due to social, political, economic and geographical factors towards the destination country which open window of opportunities they were devoid of in their indigenous country and where they could pursue their life dreams (Castelli, 2018). Among all the drivers of migration, economic



factor is most potent variable of migration as researches affirmed that majority of migrants migrated out of destitute economic conditions. The enormous outflow of migration from peripheral to core countries validated these researches. Hence, the strong ties between migration and economic development has been established among various countries (Castelli, 2018). The economic disparity between countries determined the outflow of migration which cast impact on both developed and sending countries. The brain drain and cheap labor benefited developed countries and had adverse economic impact on sending countries yet, the investment and money migrants send back to their countries of origin contribute in the economic resilience of the sending countries and making its' people economically empowered (Sriskandarajah, 2005).

The notion of empowerment emanated from modalities of power discourse. It is a process that triggers decision making mechanisms at individual level. Power in the realm of conflict, relations, legislation and decisions operated within the social, political, economic and gender domains bestowed to every individual without any external force is the true and universal definition of empowerment. The word power in empowerment implies the balance of control over the personal ideology and natural resources. So, the equal distribution and redistribution of the power is a true sense of empowerment. The dogma of power has always been constructed within the binary of oppressed and oppressors. In the gender sphere, old position of women as

subordinate to men has been a great challenge for modern world societies. The image of an “empowered women” is widely disseminated to render women share power corridor with men in socio-political and economic realms. (Rahman, 2013).

The study conducted by Hashemi, Ruth, & Riley (1995) developed eight indicators to gauge the women empowerment in developing countries. The mobilization patterns, economic sustainability, consumption decisions at micro and macro level, decision making power, political consciousness, defying family domination and participation in political protests are those eight indicators through which one can determine the empowerment of women in any society.

Among these indicators, the decisions of purchasing and consumptions and economic security is of grave concern for household women in third world countries. The women who is unable to generate income have been observed to exercise less authority on the consumption patterns of household income but, in the case of women who receive remittances from her migrant husband, the situation could be contrastive (Ahlin & Dahlberg, 2010).

Remittances is the foreign exchanged money, often transferred by the overseas workers to their indigenous areas. These remittances are the greater source of foreign capital for the developing countries. The upsurge in the inflow of remittances bring concomitant changes to the investment and

consumption in recipient countries. (Ahmad, Ahmad, & Hayat, 2013). The foreign remittances have significantly boosted the economy of Pakistan. The greater the inflows of the remittances are, the higher the economic growth of country is recorded.

The impact of migrant remittances has encompassed the country and as well as household economy of the migrant family. The ratio of male migrants is double of female migrants in every country of world which means that majority of remittances are send by male migrants and received by females. The various studies have reported the impact of remittances on socio-economic empowerment of women left behind. The UNFPA, 2006 report revealed that remittances and autonomy of recipient women are directly proportional to each other. It changes the socio-economic status of women and boost their self-esteem paving the way of women empowerment (Ibourk & Amaghous, 2014).

In Pakistan, gender gaps and rampant gender inequity continue to prevail in 21<sup>st</sup> century of modernization hampered women to progress and developed socially, politically and most importantly economically. The development researchers asserted that making women economically independent play a crucial role in empowering women. The wealth index of household has positive impact on women empowerment in Pakistan (Akram, 2018).

The Impact of male migration on women is manifold throughout the world. On the one hand, male migration and inflow of remittances enhances the women autonomy due to absence of husbands and increased household economy, on other side, residence with in-laws and inactive reproductive activities have negative implications on women liberation and health (Green, Wang, Ballakrishnen, Brueckner, & Bearman, 2019). The study conducted on Kerala, India suggested that women who received remittances directly from husband exercised more authority than women who received it through some family member. Women found liberation to decide of children's education, household expenditure and domestic issues in case of being left behind by their migrated husbands (Fleury, 2016).

Pakistan is among world's top migrant sending regions. As per the recent statistics of the Bureau of Emigration and Overseas Employment (2018:2) more than 10.4 million Pakistanis are living abroad. These overseas Pakistanis are working in various parts of the world but majority of them are concentrated in the Middle-East region. As per these statistics, about 80 per cent overseas Pakistanis are working in the Arabian Peninsula. The nature of work they are doing varies as majority of these overseas Pakistanis are doing manual labour with lower numbers doing the skilled labour. This migratory link between Pakistan and Arab region developed during 1960 and matured during 1970s. Afterwards the Pakistani labors continued to concentrate in this

region where the economy was booming and opportunities to work were never ending.

As per the World Bank (2017:3) Factbook-2017, Pakistan received about \$20.1 billion in form of remittances during this fiscal year which is obviously one of the major contribution to the country's economy. The study conducted by Imran et al. (2018) reported that remittances increases the annual household income and financial resilience of migrant households than non-migrant households in regions of Punjab (Imran, Cheok & Devadason, 2018).

The impact of migration on left behind women in Pakistan was ascertained by numerous studies on the socio-economic well-being and psychological and reproductive health of women. It has been observed that females get to grips with solitude, emotional disruption, child negligence, in-laws intervening and clash with husbands. On the other hand, the economic empowerment of females is also conspicuous as females buy goods and plan budget independently from received remittances by husbands. (Khan, Alam & Rehman, 2016).

The impact of migration and the inflow of remittances on the left behind women is paramount focus of migrant researchers across globe. They have identified some positive and some negative impacts for women back home. The impact of migration and remittances could be seen in many ways since these two variables have a multilayered effect on the left behind families in

Pakistan. There are only few researches which have looked at the role of sending money on the women left behind in family.

Present research study unearthed the relationship between remittances and empowerment of women in the locality of district Gujrat, thus the results reveal that how male's remittances empowered women both in nuclear family system and joint family system. The research explored the reasons of husband's international migration and the concomitant effect on the family structure, children socialization and more specifically, upon the life of wives has been observed.

### **1.1. Statement of the Problem**

As we know that Pakistan is among the top migrants sending countries and their citizens are working almost in all areas of the world. These people are migrated from all the regions of Pakistan for the purpose to earn money which they send back to their families to upgrade their life standards. Among all regions of Pakistan, Gujrat district has high migratory trends and the inflow of remittances to this region is greater than any other area. In this district, the migration is mainly dominated by the men and women are most of the time are left behind with other family members including children. Those women are never in such a situation to perform this kind of responsibilities as they were shielded by them men counterparts. But in their absence, they had to wear their shoes are to look after such issues which were kind of challenging

to them. The current study ascertained the social position of the women from the selective households from where at least one male migrant was living abroad and sending remittances back home and how these remittances are contributing in women socio-economic lives.

## **1.2. Research Problem**

Based on the statement of the problem I have narrowed down my research topic to “The Impact of Remittances on the Women’s Empowerment: A Case Study of Gujrat.” In this research it will be explored that how the migration of husbands and the transfer of foreign remittances have contributed towards the empowerment of women in the left behind families in the selected town quarter of Gujrat city? I have operationalized my research problem into following research questions.

## **1.3. Research Questions**

For the current study following research questions were devised:

1. Why only men move abroad from the Gujrat?
2. What are the major factors behind male out migration from Gujrat?
3. How does the migration of male household member(s) affect the life aspects of the left behind women in the selected area in Gujrat City?
4. Do women take control in allocation of remittances?

5. What is the impact of foreign remittances on the women's empowerment in the selected town quarter of Gujrat city?

#### **1.4. Objectives of the Research**

This study were the following research objectives:

1. To study the patterns and major causes of male out-migration.
2. To explore the mechanism of remittances transfers and allocation of remittances.
3. To examine the social position of women in left behind families.
4. To see the relationship between inflow of remittances and its impact on the women's empowerment in left behind families.



### **1.5. Significance of the Research**

The current research will contribute to the prevailing body of knowledge through explaining the effect of remittances on the position of women in the current locale. To understand the role of migration and remittances upon the women left behind at homes is pivotal to gain an insight into their perspective while living back home and looking after the household affairs in the absence of their husbands. The research will accentuate those factors which are indispensable for making household women empowered through economic inflow.

The social researches always aim to ameliorate the sufferings of people and to address the predicaments of societal issues and the current research also hope that it will help in resolving the issue under investigation by drawing attention of the authorities and NGOs to the prevailing problem of women's empowerment.

No specific research has been done in the Pakistan generally and in Gujrat particularly to explore this issue at length. The current research thus will enlighten people of a least explored area and will encourage other researchers as well to scrutinize this research area more meticulously.

### **1.6. Explanation of the Key Terms/Concepts**

In this section following key terms have been conceptualized and subsequently operationalized in the context of the current research.

### **1.5.1. Migration**

The process of movement from one location to another is known as migration. But in the context of the current research the migration refers to the movement from origin to the specific destination abroad- which comes under the scope of international migration. Many researchers have defined migration within the scope of their research.

One of the most comprehensive definitions has been given by IOM (2011), to them migration is “the movement of a person or a group of persons, out of the international borders, or within a State. It is a population movement, encompassing any kind of movement of people, whatever its length, composition and causes; it includes migration of refugees, displaced persons, economic migrants, and persons moving for other purposes, including family reunification.” On the other side, Kok (1999:20) defined migration as “the crossing of a spatial boundary by one or more persons involved in a change of residence.” In the case of Gujrat, the *Gujrati* people move abroad for labour related purposes and send monies back home on regular basis which is the major income source for the dependents in the left behind families. So, it is imperative for the migrants to move abroad to fulfil the basic needs of the families back home.

### **1.5.2. Remittances**

Remittances are the transfer of monies from destination state to origin by the migrants. IOM (2011) defined remittances as the “monies earned or acquired by non-nationals that are transferred back to their country of origin.” There are two types of remittances, the first is social remittances. It could be defined as “the thoughts, behaviors, individualities and social capital out flow from getting- to sending countries communities” (Levitt, 1998: 927). While the economic remittances are defined as the “Remittances, usually understood the money or goods that sent by migrants back to their families and friends in home countries, are often the most direct and well-known link between migration and development (Migration Data Portal, 2019).” In the current research case the social and economic remittances are taken as one term as it cannot be separated when it comes to the impact of remittances for women in migrant households.

### **1.5.3. Women Empowerment**

According to the UN Commission on the Status of Women (2002) “The empowerment of women is the process by which women take control over their lives, acquiring the ability to make strategic choices.” On the other side, Rahman (2013) conceptualized empowerment as “empowerment is a process of awareness and capacity building leading to greater participation, to greater decision-making power and control, and to transformative action.” Many scholars have conceptualized and explained subcomponents of empowerment

in the context of the societies they represent. Griffin (1987) mentioned that empowerment under gender lens as holding several sub-components like; a) having control, or gaining further control; b) having a say and being listened to; c) being able to define and create from a women's perspective; d) being able to influence social choices and decisions affecting the whole society (not just areas of society accepted as women's place); e) being recognized and respected as equal citizens and human beings with a contribution to make.

## Chapter 2

### 2. Review of Literature

The process of movement from one location to another is known as migration. One of the most comprehensive definitions has been given by IOM (2011), “the movement of a person or a group of persons, either nationally or internationally. It is a population movement, encompassing any kind of movement of people, whatever its length, composition and causes; it includes migration of refugees, displaced persons, economic migrants, and persons moving for other purposes, including family reunification.” On the other side Kok (1999:20) defined migration as “the crossing of a spatial boundary by one or more persons involved in a change of residence.

Migration from one region to another is one of the oldest phenomenon since ages. People have been on the move compelled by number of reasons. Poverty is considered as one the major driving forces behind migration in the recent times. The person’s migration from home country to outside world is to earn money and send them back to home that will not only contribute significantly to the wellbeing of their family, but the recipient country economy as well. (Sriskandarajah, 2005).

The number of migrants is rising day by day, elucidated in a report given by the United Nation about international migration in 2017 which stated that international migration acceded significantly in 2017. In 2000, the number of

international migration was 173 million, but as per to the report, it upsurges to 285 million in 2017. The statistics of continent wise international migration unearthed that 78 million migrants lived in Europe, 80 million in Asia, 25 million in Africa and so on.

## **2.1 Causes of Migration**

Various micro, macro and meso factors contributed in pulling people out of their indigenous land. Among the macro factors, economic, political, geographical and social conditions combined to make person move from his native land to abroad. In the list of micro factors, person's education, religious dogma, marital status, age, gender and worldview construction is pivotal in rendering him taking the decision of migration. The modern communication technology and diaspora links are enlisted as meso factors which disseminate cognizance about affluent countries and urge people to settled in those areas. The answer of why people migrate lies in the "problems and issues" of people which they struggled with in their own country. Destitute economic conditions, political chaos, environmental hazards, land encroachment and health menaces force people to leave their own country for good. Other reasons include education, religion, war, sexual identity and growing urbanization. People migrate in pursue of better educational facilities which were dearth in their native country or to escape from role conflict of gender as many LGBT people from parochial countries seek asylum in liberal countries. The other reasons are war like situations in origin country or prevalence of

religious discrimination in native country. The widespread communication network including social network attract masses towards migration by promulgating the lavish living conditions of developed countries coupled with diaspora links which facilitate migration and beget chain migration. Out of all reasons of migration, inadequate development conditions in origin country is the large driving force to compel people to migrate to run after the amenities and facilities of life. (Castelli, 2018).

## **2.2 Migration and Development**

There is no second opinion to this that majority of migration happened out of economic reasons. People migrate to earn maximum and spend maximum which makes migration as an integral part of development. The highly developed countries of Europe and America received higher number of emigrants, indicating the nexus between migration and development. The flow of migration from peripheral to core countries evinced that root cause of mobilization is to shift the status of under developed to developed. (Skeldon, 2011)

The nexus between migration and development has profound impact over the economic status of individual and state. The migrants are reflected upon as agents of development for exhibiting beneficial outcomes in both emigration and immigration countries. A transnational perspective of capitalism captures ties between development agents and state banks, organizations and institutions. The notion of development at individual and collective level deals

with the transnational business activities through remittances send back by the agents. (Faist & Fauser, 2011)

### **2.3 Remittances and its' types**

Remittances are the transfer of monies from destination state to origin by the migrants. IOM (2011) defined remittances are the “Monies earned or acquired by non-nationals that are transferred back to their country of origin.” There are two types of remittances, the first is social remittances. It could be defined as exchange of words, ideas, thoughts and other intangible items. (Levitt, 1998: 927). While the economic remittances are defined as the transfer or inflows of monies from one region to the other one. In the case of migration, it could be the financial transactions made by migrants to their native towns. Such transaction could have direct impact on the livelihoods and the development related issues at origin communities (Migration Data Portal, 2019).”

### **2.4 Positionality of men and women in migration**

For years, migration was deemed as a male phenomenon. The role of women was only to look after things left by male migrants. It was only in 1980s. when female migration surfaced as an emerging phenomenon.

The Gender role beliefs are imbued with migration decisions especially in third world countries. Women are always less likely to migrate than their male counterparts. The statistics on international migration revealed that ratio of women migration is far less than male migration even in 21st century. The



gender relations amid social representations and anticipated gender roles has dictated the behavior and actions of male and females. It was the traditional gender structure that determine which gender will migrate and which will be left behind. (Bouchoucha, 2012). The employment and parental status of females also determine the migration ratio of gender. The study revealed that higher rate of migration is experienced in families where females are unemployed and have no children than to females with jobs and children. (Cooke, 2008).

### **2.5 Contextualization of women empowerment in Third world**

According to the UN Commission on the Status of Women (2002) “The empowerment of women is the process by which women take control over their lives, acquiring the ability to make strategic choices.” On the other side, Rahman (2013) conceptualized empowerment as “empowerment is a process of awareness and capacity building leading to greater participation, to greater decision-making power and control, and to transformative action.” Many scholars have conceptualized and explained subcomponents of empowerment in the context of the societies they represent. Griffin (1987) mentioned that empowerment under gender lens as holding several sub-components like; a) having control, or gaining further control; b) having a say and being listened to; c) being able to define and create from a women’s perspective; d) being able to influence social choices and decisions affecting the whole society (not

just areas of society accepted as women's place); e) being recognized and respected as equal citizens and human beings with a contribution to make.

Definition of empowerment varies from society to society. The locatedness and context reflect upon on notion of empowerment very uniquely. Where first world countries women are striving for their political and abortion rights, the women in third world are still succumb to savage practices of molestation and killings. Gender inequity remain a grave concern in third world regions where women are still battling with the predicaments of honor killings, rape, molestations, unfair job conditions, acid attacks and political discrimination. The prevalence of conventional cultural norms hindered women active participation in economic and political realm of society.

Thus the concept of 'empowerment' in third world countries is very much different from developed regions. The unanimous image of empowered women in third world country is a women having access to education, jobs and have autonomy over consumption patterns (Bulbeck, 2007).

## **2.6. International Migration, facts and figure**

Migration is international phenomenon in this globalized era. The current estimate on migration shows that around 272 million people were international migrants in the world in 2019, which equal to 3.5 percent of the world population (UN DESA, 2019). There is strong evidence on migration and mobility that reveals that it is mostly links with global economy, social,

political and technological transformation, that affecting wide range of high priority policy issues (Castles 2010). Since the release of world migration report 2018 in late 2017, in last two years, a lot has happened in migration (IOM, 2017:5). This rapid migration brought historic changes at global level thus, United Nations Members states became together to finalize global compacts on international manifestation of migration and displacement. These were two compacts “global compact for safe” and “the compact on Refugees”. These compact were finalized, because of the result of long term efforts by states, various international organizations, civil societies and so many other actors (private sector organization) to improve that how migration have to governed at international level (UNGA, 2016).

According to International Migration Report 2017 international migration was increased in rapid speed, the number of international migration in 2000 was 173 million which reached to 220 million in 2010, but currently in 2017 it reached to 258 million which shows a huge difference and rapid growth. Further, among the 285 million international migrates, 80 million or 60 percent were living in Asia, 78 million in Europe, 58 million in North America, 25 million in Africa and 10 and 8 million by Caribbean and Oceania respectively (IOM, 2017).

According to the same report of IOM (2017), the largest origin country of international migration was India (17 million migrants), followed by Mexico 13 million, Russian Federation 11 million, China 10 million, Bangladesh

7million, Syrian Arab 7 million, while Pakistan and Ukraine had 6 million international migrants. According to the report, ratio of women migrants was less as compared to men in all international migration. It was mentioned that the share of women in international migration was 49 percent in 2000 which fell to 48 percent in 2017.

The last year report of IOM (2019) showed, the number of international migrants was reached to 272 million. This report showed interesting results revealing the acceded number international migrants was changed from Asia to Europe. In last 2017 report of IMR, 80 million migrants had lived in Asia and 78 million in Europe and as per the report figures, the number of international migrants in Asia was 49 million while in Europe it was 82 million.

The movement of people across the border is for higher social and economic wellbeing of their left behind families and this movement of migrants also decreases the unemployment ratio of the origin country (Erman, 1998). According to World Bank (2019) people migrated internationally, for the purpose to alleviate poverty and upgrade their growth at origin country by sending remittances.

People moving abroad sending remittances to their homes which not only upgrade the living standard of their siblings, but also the economy of their host countries. According to the IOM (2019) the remittances of international

migrants reached to 688 billion US\$ globally in 2018. The remittances of developing countries in 2000 were 79 billion US\$ which were reached to 498 US\$ in 2018. Some of the European countries showed record inflow of remittances. In this regards, Southern and Eastern Asia 155 billion US\$, Central and Southern Asia 142 US\$, Latin and the Caribbean 90 billion US\$, North Africa and Western Asia 69 billion US\$, Sub Sahara Africa 46 billion US\$, North America 9 billion US\$, while Oceania recorded 4 billion US\$.

## **2.7. Role of Kinship in International Migration**

According to Giddens (2009) a person socialization, existence, sanctions, and rewards are determining by their kinship. The role of kin is not only to give identity to us, but they regulate our actions through norms and values and set goals for us and upgrade our inspirations and expectations over a time. Kinship structure have strong influence on the decision-making of a person. Decision making is not the work of single actor in their social structure, but he/ she will counsel it with their family and household in order to minimize the risks and maximize the outcomes (Adepoju, 1995).

Massey, Durand and Nolan (2002) conducted a study in china about the influence of kinship structure among the youth, according to them, the intensions of international migration among youth have strong influence of the kinship structure and its related actions.

Haviland (1974) conducted a study, he found that in the socio-economic, cultural understanding, and interests within the psychological systems are set by the kinship. Simply he means that they play active role in organizing obligations and interests of the people in their social network. Tiemoko (2004) conducted a survey in West Africa about 600 return migrants to know about the role of family or household in the decision making of their migration and remittances, the respondents of the study argued that, the role of family has positive role in the maximization of remittances and selecting better destination for migration.

In connection to the role of kinship in international migration, Annett (2006) conducted a study in which he collected qualitative ethnographic data during a field research about the role of family in the decision making of migrants to move garment from Cameroon. According to this study, the individual migrant does not migrate to earn money to achieve individual goals, but he is link with a group in reciprocal relationship that have certain responsibilities on him. Thus, individual visit to more productive place where he can earn more and more and maintain good reciprocal relation with their family or household.

## **2.8. Remittances Receiver in Left behind Family of migrants**

As the IOM reports of 2017 and 2019 reports showed, that majority of international migrants are men. The aim of these migrants is to earn money

and send to back to homes to make propitious their families in origin countries. Generally, it is noticed, that migrated men send remittances to their counterparts (Orozco et al. 2009 and Orozco and Paiewonsky 2007).

Researches were conducted in Guatemala (IOM and Un-Instraw 2007) in Colombia, where men usually move in greater number such as figures ranging from 63 to 70 % recipient of remittances are women. These studies also unveiled that some of the migrants send remittances to the other members of the family. Another study was conducted in Bangladesh that elaborated, the migrants opt to send remittances to the others family members of relative instead of their wives, because they don't want their counterpart to face such a hassle of going into the streets to receive remittances (Debnath and Selim 2009).

## **2.9. The Role of Remittances in Left behind Family of Migrant**

Undoubtedly, remittances help in improving both the social and economic life of receiving households. It acts like social and economic support for kins /close relative at origin. In this connection a study was conducted in Philippine that showed, remittances help the receiving households to fulfill their basic needs of life, quality of homes and education. Further, it also abled them to established small business for themselves. Those respondents who were interviewed, majority of them were owner of their houses and even those

whose remittance sender were on low skilled job were the owner of their own houses (Go 2009).

Similarly, a study was conducted by Bryant (2005) about the positive impact of remittances upon the left behind family of migrant, according to the study, remittance has important role in the up gradation of migrants' household economy. Further, it was found that remittances are used to meet basic necessities of household, constructs new houses, purchase properties and pay for children education and health. The findings of IOM in the case of the Bangladesh where women who were receiving remittances by themselves were enjoying better life as compare to those women who had to depend on other in the case of reception of remittances (Debnath and Selim, 2009).

The IMO's study suggested that women who had received money from their migrant male are positively associated with the education of the women and better socio-economic status of their household. Further, the age of recipient women is also of the important factor. If she is young, then she can make any decision very easily on their own behalf.

#### **2.10. How Remittances Empowered Women in decision making in Left behind Family**

The sending money from migrant men to their women have great role in their household life and decision making. A study was conducted in Anglo to see the patterns of household head in the families of migrants which concluded, that men are in most of the case heading the families and decide how



remittances are used and they were in favor of women's consultation in family affairs (Alvarez 2009). Another study was conducted in Bangladesh which showed that wives who were economically empowered by sending remittances of their male partners directly to them as they were having more control over the allocation of such remittances. Such acts made the left behind wives more powerful in decision making of family. Women who had no role in remittances reception and allocation had to face hardships as their say was not considered as equal to the men of the family even though their husbands were sending remittances but they were not getting benefits out of such transactions. The male members were allocating such remittances for their personal need but not considering other family members especially women in mind that they might be in need to have such money for their needs as well (Debnath and Selim 2009).

The women who were having control over the reception and allocation of the remittances can be more autonomous in terms of decision making and consumption patterns. In Egypt two-third of the households consisted on male migrants and women were the de facto head of the household. Up to 50 percent women claimed that they make their household decision alone that how to spend remittances (IOM 2010). Women's spending patterns tried to reduce the irregularity of the spending patterns as one can observe in the case of men's allocation of such resources (Ramirez et al. 2005).

Beside this, it is also cleared from various studies, if husband is migrant, it does not necessarily lead to change in the gender roles in terms of women empowerment of decision making at household. In IMO's China study, those male who are migrated from their household made decisions on framing and home investments via letter (Jacka 2009).

Sometime women left behind, the multiple role upon them can cause burden on their shoulder, in relations is she is involved in agriculture type activities (Ghosh 2009). In the absence of male household, the empowered women also faced certain negative consequences due to over workload. The great amount of work burden united with the expressive feelings of absences that appear to be devastating and even leads to certain physical and mental health issues. One of the study in Mexico City highlighted this problem, called the Penelope Syndrome (the amalgamation of various symptoms depression related despises) (Ruiz & Vargas-Silva, 2010).

The basic reason of migration of men from origin country is to send remittances, but they also left their women at home and left burden of responsibilities on their shoulders. According to Shrestha and Conway (2001) that women left behind families are living under the shadow of their husband, under the shadow, the mountains of their places and the academic discourse of the migration. The responsibilities upon women left behind families sometime make them empowered in taking various decisions and most of the decisions in the absence of their husbands.

With respect to handling the sending money to consumed, and running small business in absence of husbands, and wives left bind house at may have to represent the households publically in the broader community. This contribution of women in the social activities sometime become challenge from the norms of that society, because of women freedom (Ramirez et al.2005).

Those women who receive remittances of their migrant's men have great role to increase money and do so many other decisions in concern with their family up gradation effective resource management (Kasper 2006). Unfortunately, this benefit of control over family decisions also place burden on the women wellbeing (Agasty 2014). Decision making is more confined with in-laws and extend to the general household decisions. In this connection some of the migrant's wives reported that when a wife of migrant husband wants to visit to doctor, attend internal care, this decision shall be made by the mother in-law and who will also accompany her on clinic visit (Gartaula 2012). Women who live in nuclear family system have more decision making power to compare those who live in joint or extended family system. Abadan Unat (1977) conducted a study upon Turkish women in which he found that the decision making power of nuclear families' women were strong as compare to others.

### **2.11. Impact of Remittances on children left behind**

By coming to the role of remittances in the development of child, it is clear that it can fulfill the basic needs of life, but moral behavior of children shall be in danger. During an interview, a women reported in Bangladesh, that her sons are lack of way straighter (Father). Thus the children are very often to send madrassa for discipline and better learning. (Debnath and Selim 2009, 140). Besides this, remittances have very positive impact on the children personality development and good schooling. In Philippine, majority of the children in overseas Filipino workers' household admitted in private schools. They were excellent at their school as compare to those who were non-OFW households. Their school regularity and punctuality was also better than others. The children themselves identified that, in their good performance is due to their mother's counseling and handling responsibilities (Go 2009; IOM 2010). Further, In IOM's study in Egypt explored that education was very well and the basic reason was that, the remittances which were in the hand of women, she spent more on their children' education after general household expenses (IOM 2010).

In contrast to the above positive impact of migration, it has also some negative consequences on the children's academic performance. According to Hu (2013) analysis of data which was collected in rural northwest china during a research study, if the adult left the household, it will negatively affect the education performance of their children left behind. Similarly, Nobles (2011)

reported after conducted study in Mexico, that children with migrant fathers were lower educational aspiration as compared to those whose parents were available with them at their homes.

In connection with the above two studies in contrast of the positive impact of migration on the children's education left behind, another study was conducted by Kroeger and Anderson (2014) to examined the impact of remittances upon the educational performance of children in Kyrgyzstan. This study found that those household who received remittances were lower rates of children enrollment in school between the ages of 14 to 18. The author concluded from the study that remittances are link with the absent of adult members from the house. Although these provide economic stability to the household members left behind, but leads negative consequences on the enrollment of the younger one in the house.

### **2.12. Remittances and changing pattern in women health**

The migration practice is global as well as multidimensional, people under various push and pull factors tend to move towards the other parts of the world and used to generate remittances in order to make the money available for their household basic needs. By jotted down review of past researches, the effect of remittances upon the health care utilization avenue is thoroughly analyzed. Amuedo-Dorantes and Pozo (2011) presented a basic analysis which defines the nature of linkage between the remittances and the health

care utilization. The researchers testify that the remittances have a potential impact on health care utilization and expenditures, while with the rise in the remittances level the health care utilization becomes more efficient because of sufficient money available to get the appropriate health care facilities back home.

Prior to this maneuver using 2002 Mexico Survey, Amuedo-Dorantes and Pozo (2009) also conducted a study in which they deduce the same results that international remittances raise health expenditures by allowing the household members to seek better maternal health care facility. According to a calculated figure of this study “approximately 6 pesos of every 100-peso increment in remittance income are spent on health.” Remittances equalize the usage of health care services by households and other expenditures. According to Jorge (2008) there exists a significant positive relationship between remittances and the household’s expenditure on health for households. Jorge used a Tobit model and deduced that “10 percent changes in remittances are devoted to health expenditure.”

Hildebrandt and McKenzie (2005) conducted a study and evidenced that basically it is the migration practice which imparts a vibrant effect on the health care seeking pattern of the migrant dependent households. The process of migration let the migrant to be aware of the situation and worldview of the people where they migrated and hence they learn most of the practices in a process which they share and let their dependents implement in the home

states. This process of acquiring the knowledge and worldview is called as a “social remittances.” They further argue that the remittances used to increase with the increase in birth weights and reductions in infant and child mortality. Kanaiaupuni and Donato (1999) conducted a research in Mexico where they examined the effects of remittances on infant survival ratio i.e. the delivery care, postnatal and prenatal care. In the report results, they observed that remittances have an indispensable contact on controlling the infant mortality ratio.

Lucas (2005) conducted a brief study and extends a concise account on the effect of remittances especially on the developing countries and under developing countries. He divided the effect of remittances as short term and long term. The short-term effect is usually entails the increases in consumption ratio, poverty alleviation and income inequality that result in alterations in labor market participation. This is the poverty which affects the health care avenue of the people in the countries like Pakistan. Due to poverty the maternal mortality rates get higher and higher. They lack adequate resources to consult the health care specialties; ultimately the prenatal care is not properly maintained. Besides a vital issue of malnutrition also prevails there in the rural settings, due to which the mother doesn't adhere hygienic environment for the healthy nourishment of the infant. The long-term effect is the socioeconomic development, primarily on the education and Health Care Avenue. Therefore, the remittances impart a long term yet sustainable effect

upon the health care. This is a broad and overview of the multidimensional effect of remittances upon the household and upon the public.

In deep analysis, the matter of concern by testifying the effect of remittance on the health care utilization, Fajnzylber and Lopez (2007) demeanor a research in Guatemala and Nicaragua. In this maneuver, they analyzed the outcome of the level of remittances generation and its effect on the child health care avenue. The research outcomes prevalently portray that the individuals receiving remittances tend to exhibit higher health care utilization than those recipients' households which are devoid of this. A study conducted in the Indian context by Zachariah et al. (2001) in Kerala State prevalently testifies the fact the remittances used to increase the level of health care seeking facilities. In this scenario the increased spending on health services by the migrant's households tends them to move towards the private sector for attaining the sophisticated health care facilities. In the third world countries it is a perpetual fact that the public sector hospitals lack appropriate advocacy regarding the treatment of the illness while on the contrary the private sector hospitals dispense efficient health care consultation regarding the matters of prenatal, delivery and post natal issues.

### **2.13 Role of remittances in women empowerment in Pakistan**

According to Kabeer (1999) the word empowerment is consisted upon three dimensions: the resource, agency and achievements. Most importantly it refers



to the ability of making choice in those situation where previously the ability was denied.

In social sciences women empowerment is not a new discourse, researchers constantly study this social phenomenon (Suja, 2012). There is a huge amount of literature that shows the importance of women's empowerment in the development process (UNO, 2014). Voices of left behind women present two types of life they have after male migration. Sardevi (interviewed by Gartuala et al. 2011:9) explains her situation: "So far, I am satisfied with my personal life, even if my husband stays separate." Suhana (interviewed by Gartuala et al. 2011:8) has experienced different effects of her husband's movement: "I do not think that my position in the family and the society has improved due to his migration. I am treated the same as before."

About the role of women being empower, IOM and UN- INSTRAW 2007 states "women become critical actors in the remittance-to-development paradigm, and understanding differential gender characteristics in remittance use, savings and investments becomes a major prerequisite for the success of local development programs". The discussion is obvious and shows that how migrant's women survive when left behind at home and how they take various decisions of life. Now, focusing upon this issue and relate it with the Pakistani context, Pakistani female are also facing the similar condition facing women

in other countries of the world whose male are migrated and they have left behind.

There was a dearth of research in the field of migration while focusing on the women during 1980s and 1990s. DeLaet (1999:13) rightly identified this vacuum by mentioning that, “the invisibility of women in international migration scholarship does not correspond to the reality of international migration. By mentioning that the author identified that the women by that were comprising a major proportion of international migration but unfortunately they did not get the attentions of the researchers to focus on their issues. The migration scholarship continuously remained focused on the males’ migratory outflows, their adjustment, economies, and remittance contributions. Pessar and Mahler’s (2003) contribution is one of the iconic to signal out the gender exclusivity in international migration while pointing out the flaws in the researchers previously focused only on the men’s migration.

Sathar and Kazi (2000:98) conducted a research in Pakistan and identifies some key components of the women’s autonomy in the context of rural Pakistani patriarchal society. They have mentioned that following are the key indicators with some sub indicators to understand the position of women; a) domestic decision-making, b) financial decision-making, c) access to household resources, d) mobility, e) fear of husband, and f) communication. In Indian context, Bloom, Wypij and Gupta (2001) studied the role of

women's autonomy in maternal health care utilization in parts of India. They looked at three tier of autonomy including a) freedom of movement, b) control over finances, and c) decision-making power. They found a positive effect of the three tier indices of women's autonomy but for them the major deciding factors in the case of antenatal care was the freedom of movement which they proved through the statistical results.

With reference to the association between migration and women's empowerment, Hugo (2000) mentioned that gender and women empowerment issues have generally been studied by the number of researchers under the migration studies domain but largely from the migrant sending regions. Lenoel (2017:2-3) identifies the positive role of the migration for the women in left behind families by identifying that male members' migration can bring money through inflow of foreign remittance which can increase the direct investments and also contributes to the social remittances. Furthermore, there could be a change in the domestic affairs concerning labour, family structure (nuclearization could be the major outcome), female could do paid employment, and fertility could be decreased either because of the males' absence due to migration or the start of paid jobs. Ultimately, women in the left behind families' get more autonomy.

Ahlin and Dahlberg (2010:35) tried to explore the effect of migration and remittances in the case of left behind women in Mali and found that there is possibly little effect of these two variable for the women's empowerment in

the case of Malian women. The decision-making a household level was not effect as there was a strong tradition of men's involvement is decision-making. The role of social structure and society is very pivotal when it comes to the women's autonomy in societies like Mali. Their study also concluded that the role of culture and societal norms are of paramount importance in sustainability of the remittances women receive. The societal structure not only effect on the migration patterns but on women's lives as well. (Ahlin & Dahlberg, 2010).

Women's role in managing remittances at origin have been explored at length by number of researchers and organizations. They have identified that in some countries like Guatemala and Colombia, 63 per cent and 70 per cent women were the remittances recipients (IOM and UN-INSTRAW 2007; IOM et al. 2007).

## Chapter 3

### 3. Methods and Methodology

#### 3.1. Research Design

For the current research descriptive research design was used to collect descriptive data from the selected respondents. The Unit of Data Collection for the current study was married women whose husbands were living abroad under the category of migrants from Marghzar Colony, in Gujrat City.

#### 3.2. Locale

The “Marghzar Colony” in Gujrat City was chosen as a locale of the research as one can find many families in which women in the absence of their migrant husbands have been living in this colony.



Fig. No. 1. Map of the Locale (Marghzar Colony, Gujrat City)  
Source: Google maps

### **3.3. Units of Data Collection**

The unit of data collection or target population for the current study was those women whose male members were migrated from Pakistan and were left behind in their families in Gujrat city. The purpose of collection data from these women was, they were facing these situation being wives of migrated male members.

### **3.4. Methods of Data Collection**

This was a descriptive research, thus three methods were employed for collection of data from respondents, such as;

- a) Key Informants Interviews
- b) In-depth Interviews
- c) Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

Key informant in research is the indigenous person of the area who hold comprehensive knowledge and access to the geographical locality of the area and the inhabitants of the area. The researcher had chosen two key informants with regard to their experience and knowledge about the locale.

At first phase two key Informant Interviews were conducted to set the framework of the research analysis. At second phase of the data collection, 02 focus group discussions (FGDs) were also done with the selected women to comprehend the understandings about the process of migration and its impact

on women in left behind families. At third stage of the research 20 in-depth interviews (from 10 each from women belonging to nuclear and joint families respectively) were conducted from the women left behind their husband at home after migration and sending remittances to them. In-depth interviews were taken from the formulated interview guide of the research. According to Kumar (1987), focus group discussion is a semi structured data collecting method of the research for the sake of extensive and prompt responses of the respondents in which researcher play a passive role by only initiating the debate among group participants followed by detailed discussions and opinions of the group members. (Kumar, 1987). In present research, researcher formulated group of seven respondents and introduced research topic to them for open discussion which was then recorded and analyzed by the researcher.

The purpose of using these three qualitative data collection methods was to collect detailed information about the process of migration, the inflow and utilization of remittances, the social position of women in left behind families, and gradual shift in role of women in post migration situation.

### **3.5. Sampling Technique**

To draw a smaller group among legion is referred to as sampling. Vocrell defines sampling as a strategy to extract a smaller number of people among large chunk of group with keeping in view the positionality of respondent so

that the gathered data from sub group can be generalized to the whole community.

In present research, data was generated among migrant families who were scattered in whole area so there was no sample frame available of the migrant families in the locale. Purposive sampling technique was thus employed for the selection of the respondents from the left behind families. Purposive sampling helped researcher selecting respondents pertinent to the topic and purpose of the research who could adequately address the research questions of the study. Key informants of the research had helped in identifying the migrant families and left behind women. Researcher meet them all in personal and had chosen those women whom she found more relevant to generate data.

### **3.6. Sample Size**

20 married women were selected in a sample size of the research. 10 women were from nuclear family and 10 were from joint family. All the women had their husbands working abroad and they sent remittances on regular basis.

### **3.7. Data Analysis**

The data were analyzed thematically and Codes were made, such as open coding, axial coding and selective coding.

### **3.8. Ethical consideration**

The body of data was gathered and generated amid ethical framework of the research. The data was collected from the respondents through their consent



by exposing informed consent to them. The purpose of the study was disclosed to respondents without concealing any facts. The anonymity and confidentiality of those respondents were kept who were not willing to reveal their identity.

The respondents were also convinced and satisfied that their given data shall be kept confidential and will never be disclose to any authority.

## Chapter 4

### 4. Conceptual Framework

The concept of “women’s empowerment” or autonomy is not an easy concept to define. Various researchers have discussed and explained this concept within the subject domain of their practice. Among others, Jejeebhoy & Sathar (2001), Bloom, Wypij, & Gupta (2001), Kabeer (2002), and Lenoel (2017) are the important researchers.

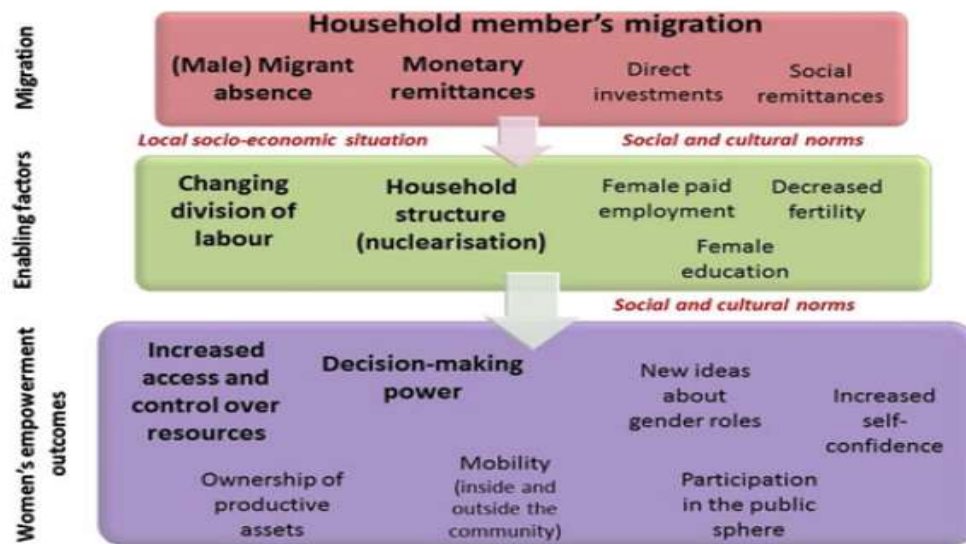


Fig.4.1. Male-out Migration and Women’s Empowerment (Lenoel, 2017:3)

The conceptual framework of “Gendered Geographies of Power” which was developed by Pessar and Mahler (2003:815-16) was used for the current study. In this theory the authors have pioneered in bringing gender in the migration studies while explaining the three dimensions of model. In their

view, there are three scales of power i.e. a) geographical scale, b) social locations, and c) power geometries.

While explaining the first element, geographical scale they stated that “it represents the understanding that gender operates simultaneously at several socio-spatial scales- the body, the family or household, and the ethno national group” (Ahlin and Dahlberg, 2010:16). While the second element, “social locations stands for the individual positions within power hierarchies created through different factors such as kinship, history, economy and gender” (Ahlin and Dahlberg, 2010:16).

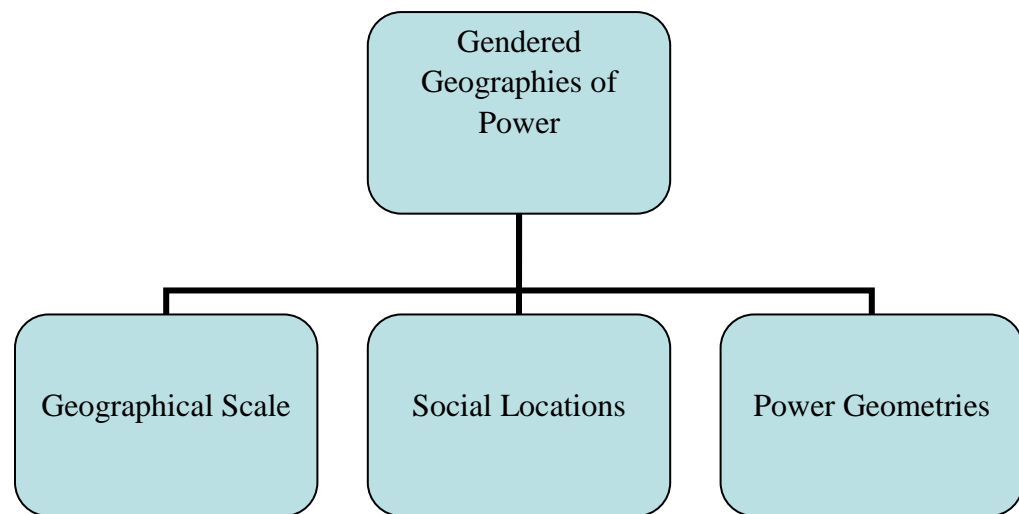


Fig. No. 4.1 Gendered Geographies of Power

They are of the view that the individual can fall anywhere in the social positions ranging between most disadvantaged to most privileged ones.

Migration and the remittances may affect the power hierarchies and perhaps change the social position of the women. The last element “power geometries” explains the situation in the context of the second element and further elaborate that “people are affected by the above stated social locations, they are also themselves affecting and asserting power over these forces and processes, such as migration and remittances (Ahlin and Dahlberg, 2010:16).

## Chapter 5

### 5. Findings and Discussion

#### 5.1. Reasons behind Male Migration

Most of the population in district Gujrat is depending on agriculture economic as a source of livelihood and the second major income generating activity in Gujrat is cottage industry. But, these two economic activities don't meet the basic needs of the inhabitants of this district. Since many decades, these people sorted out an alternate option to either move within country or to go abroad to enhance economic productivity.

The international migration is not a new phenomenon (Khan et al., 2009; Khan, 2017) as these *Gujratis* made their debut in international migration about six decades back. The first waves of these people moved to selected destinations in Europe, especially Greece, Norway, Germany, and Italy (Khan, 2017). Later on, they started moving towards the Gulf region upon establishment of oil pumping and construction businesses.

There are number of pushing factors in the case of Gujrat. The agriculture doesn't provide sustained income to the people since they had to depend on the rain fed cultivation. In addition to that, there are only few opportunities for laborers in small/cottage industries and most of them are based in industrial estate in the city. In the rural regions, the options of earning are further

shrinking for the inhabitants. On the other side, those who move abroad get instant jobs which urged other people to move as well in pursue of better life standards. The differences in wages at origin country and migrated country is conspicuous and a great driving force for migration. The minimum earning in native country becomes maximum in migrated country which is sufficient enough to regulate the household expenditure without any hampering. The difference of wages at origin country and migrated country coupled with difference in terms of the currency exchange appeals people to move their permanent settlement.

The role of kinship and friend's network is pivotal in the case of Gujrat where the caste system still runs deep in the people's lives and they extend their kind support to send their close relative abroad. Those fathers who are working abroad contribute towards the chain migration or the substitute migration for thinking that rather spoiling their kids back in Gujrat, the upbringing of children must be happen in destination country to make them more productive. But in most of the cases, this chain migration is not for the whole family rather than the male in their productive ages are considered as an asset to invest on.

The culture of migration is another leading factor behind the huge outflow of migrants from this district as people follow the footprints of other who have improved their economic situation because of out-migration. The access to the better resources and options of better livelihood is one of the major objectives

of life for every family but to get access to such luxuries is not possible for the larger population in Pakistan. The migrant families had such luxuries out of the improved economic conditions which they attained because of the remittances. So, one can see the escalated social and economic position of families when they started receiving remittances.

In gist, the whole purpose of migration in the community is to find dream job, earn maximum and upgrade the living standard of their families to uplift their socio-economic status in the society.

## **5.2. International Migration, Remittances and Women in Left behind**

### **Families**

Gujrat is one of the leading districts in Punjab province from where the men take journey to battle poverty and counter other issues. Such migrations are considered as a prestigious way to uplift the families' economy. In some cases, the aspirants are those who are misfit in the locale, pursue economic struggle and sort their ways by moving abroad either following clandestine ways or the legal/formal ways. It is very common among the youth and middle-aged persons to look for such opportunities of moving abroad with the kind support of their family and friends' networks. These networks are very crucial in the chain migration (Shah, 1998; Nair, 1998).

Contrary to other migrant sending regions, in the case of Pakistan migration is considered only a men's phenomenon and in most of the cases women had to live in the household. (Khan, 2017).

Women's empowerment is very crucial issue to be taken in the scenario where men's having control over the resources and patriarchy is in force to lead the men's way by controlling over the household's resources. In the case of Gujrat city, where one can find the nuclear familial pattern and even in such cases the women are not in-charge of the household resources. A proxy household head is made out of the men-folks of the family who take care of most of the affairs including the remittances reception and its utilizations. The initial focus of this research was to look at the women's say in the left behind families as the general perception is not good about such women and their suffering is reported extensively by number of studies conducted elsewhere.

In the left behind families, remittances play a crucial rule in the welfare. They depend on these continued resources for their survival and if there is a break in reception of remittances then it becomes very challenging for them to survive. Sometimes, it becomes very difficult for the left behind families to choose among the male members to be remained with them or to get sustained incomes through the remittances reception. When it asked the form the left behind families about this very phenomenon they were hanging in between both thing they need to have their spouses with them but at the same time they



were very curious about the inflows of remittances as one of the wives mentioned:

“For me it is very difficult to live a life without my husband at house all around year. But I shall be compromising as I know our family’s needs are only met because of the migration of my husband. We had to face crisis whenever my husband loses job or if extends his stay here in Pakistan. If we had to choose from having him with us or to have money it would have difficult to choose one as both are the necessary thing a family needs all the time.”

There are certainly some challenges that had been faced by the women in the absence of the counterparts. When kids are grown up they need especial care and the men’s care could never have been replaced by women in the case of Gujrat where kids are being spoiled in the absence of their father. The increased incomes are the leading reasons behind such behaviors. A mother explained the situation she had to face in the absence of her husband.

“When my husband moved to Italy, our kids were very young and their education performance was very good, but few years later, they became truant and their education became a challenge for our family. They lost their interests in education and started idle activities like playing cricket and billiard all the

day with their friends. I had to tell their father about such activities and thus we all became so worried about them. Later on, when they were unable to pass the matriculation exam, we had to pull them out of school and look for suitable ways to send them abroad.”

### **5.3. Remittances Reception and Utilization Patterns: A Gender Lens**

It is very common for the other migrant sending region to have a family control on remittances but in the case of Gujrat where the definition of family is a joint one the control over the remittances is not in the hands of the left behind wives rather father of husband or brother of husband take all economic affairs under their control and give a part of remittances of the husband to the left behind wives. In such scenario the women had to depend on the other to take money to take care of the kids of the person who is sending money. The remittances are considered as the family’s income not some individual like the very wife of the one who is working abroad and sending those for their loved one’s back home.

“I am very disappointed about the way remittances are received by the other men of family and the way these are allocated. In a case of special seasonal festivities like Eids my husband send some extra money but my kids are the last who go shopping as the elder brother of my husband who is the head of the

household first does all shopping for his family and at the last he does for mine. Whenever I complained about such attitudes to my husband he said don't worry I will send some extra money next time for the needs of our kids. He considers his brother's kids as his own and treats them equally but the brother-in-charge doesn't take things like that. Male members of the left behind families are always curious about the showoff of the money and assets. They mostly spend resources on such thing which are unproductive and money is wastes without considering the sustained returns.”

One of the common spending patterns in most of the families in Gujrat is on the purchase of cars as it is considered one of the prime goals for the left behind families to have a newer model of cars at home. This is not just for the purpose to meet the need of family's travel rather to showing off other that we have now hand on the resources and the upward mobility is somehow assessed through such indicators. In some cases, land is purchased for the construction of big houses and again the purpose of such investments in not to get return out of such investments rather than to facilitate the larger family live in a joint setup. Malik Zeeshan who established a business of house construction in Gujrat city discussed the investment patterns of such families in the purchasing houses in the city. He added that,

“It is very common for the left behind families to shift from the rural areas to the city center whenever they afford to do so. In such cases when the migrant members return home they look for the newly constructed house in the city. I have never seen a woman to search for the houses but it remained a men’s domain to purchase a house. If a male member is not available in the family, then the responsibility is assigned to the close relative to do so on behalf of the family.”

In the case of small and large purchases for the household the consent of the male migrants is considered as primary even if they are working abroad. Grocery and other petty need are very common in which women have full authority to spend remittances as they don’t need to take permission from their husbands. One of the respondents mentioned:

“I have full control over the small purchases of the family as my husband only asks me about what total money I need to cater such needs. It is very easy for me to make a list of the grocery items and get those from the cash and carry in our nearby shopping center. Most I take my kids along to do so. There is not harm in managing such things when your husband is away and you are left with no other options to manage it lonely.”

Educational and health related needs are also met through the remittances and such spending are considered as primary among left behind families. Khan (2017) found a positive impact of remittances on the education and health related spending in the case of Karrianwala village where the researcher conducted ethnographic study. In the current locale, such spending was under the control of women in nuclear families and under men in joint family system. Women were seen very reluctant in taking such decisions about the admission of their child to a specific school before such steps they normally take consent of their husbands but thing were totally different in joint family system where men were available and they were making bold decision even without consulting their male migrant members in advance about such decisions. The contact-advice mechanism (Khan, 2017) were more active for such decision in nuclear families where females were in-charge. One of the respondents mentioned that:

“For me, I am accustomed to take permission from my husband about small spending as he is the one who is financially contributing the family so he must be aware about the utilization of remittances. Although, he has never intruded in such affairs as he is very clear about such spending but even then I take him on board on such matters. In our family, we spend wisely so that the family could live prosperous life.”

There are some common trends in Gujrat and elsewhere regions about the nonproductive spending of remittances. One common trait of the *Gujratis* is to spend big on refurbishing houses although those could be source of wealth but, that is not sustained outcome of such investment and in such families where only few members are living back, spending huge money on revamping of house structure is not a wise decision. But the perception of the migrant households is totally contrary to the common persons as they consider it necessary indicator for their mobility to have a big house.

They wanted other family members to have belief in their upward mobility by constructing big houses. Such properties are considered as common traits of migrant households and one can assess from a distance while only looking at the physical structures of the building that they are the migrant families' houses. Thus, the lavish houses become the symbol of migration in the community. One of the respondents mentioned that:

“We construct big house not only we need those rather to showoff other that we have made some financial uplifting because of migration. One common reasons are that we wanted to secure our monies on such investments and for secured future it is necessary to have own house. But in the case of a financial crisis of the family we can sell our house to counter the crisis. If we don't have one, then it might not be possible for us to come out of such crises.”

There was another reason mentioned by an elderly lady during interview about the investments made for the construction of big houses. She mentioned that when my husband got retired from his factory job in Germany, he spent his whole savings on the construction of big house in the city citing that I may lose this money or we may spend all the money in vain so it would be better to have property for our kids and we may live a shining retired life back in Pakistan.

#### **5.4. Contesting Women's Empowerment in the Left behind Families**

The researcher used the “Gendered Geographies of Power” coined by Pessar and Mahler (2008:815-16) while the situation of the women was analyzed in the left behind families in the selected town quarter in Gujrat city. It was very challenging to sort out the position of women under the lens of this framework as it narrates (women's) power at three scales a) geographical scale- which tries to sort out the gender positioning at several levels such as individual's body, family, and societal level. Every situation can have same or different gendered positioning but it may also vary from one unit of scale to the other. For the current research we may chose three scales to analyze the women's positioning at individual, familial and ethnic level because may not extend our lens to the national or societal level.

Women in the left behind families were having the variant social position that was purely subject to the family system they represented. In the case of a joint

family system their position was not in a commanding place rather they had to depend on others in all sorts of life aspects. For such case the control over women was considered as the affairs of men folks of the households and they were there to only comply to the deeds of those men even not their own husbands rather than the close/blood relatives of the husbands. A respondent from a joint family system mentioned that:

“Sometimes, it becomes so embarrassing to me when I complaint to my husband about the attitude of his brothers and father but his response to my complaint is never generous. He thinks that they are having full authority to order me and I should be the obedient one. In such cases my visit to my natal family is subject to the approval of the men of household not my own husband.”

So, familial understanding about the women’s rights and privileges could be subject to the handholds’ self-portal of the position of women. They may sort reference from the other families they might know or to some extent they might refer to the religious or the cultural context in which they have hailed. Since the Pakistani society in general is a patriarchal in nature where the say of women is not considered as a right to them rather they are annexed to menfolk for their self -rights. So, the ethno-national narrative about the women could affect their positioning in left behind households.



The second scale of the gendered geographies of power is about the social locations which explains the social position of individuals (for the current research context, women in left behind families) within power hierarchies such as through kinship, history, economy and gender. Men's social position in the current locale context can't be compared with women as there is no comparison of both the genders here in Gujrat. The men are enjoying all the privileges even if they are nonproductive but being a man their say in every life aspect is considered important and women who may be contributing more in terms of family's progress but their contribution has no viability for the family's men.

It is never easy for the women to live a lonely life and take care of the kids in the absence of their counterparts but they do to for the family's prosperity but this effort has no weightage when it comes to the credit giving or praising one's contribution for the family. Men context their position as a primary one because they think out economic contribution is the commanding force which runs the families but the miss the sacrifices made by their counterparts in their absence.

The final element of power geometries is concerning the locus of power in the sense, who is at giving end and who is at receiving end in the context of migration and remittances. Since the migration is a men's phenomenon in the case of Gujrat (Khan et al. 2012) they always consider themselves as the superior to the ones (women/wives) who sit back in the household and only

allocate those remittances. So, to these men of household either present in the family or living their lives abroad consider them as the major actors in the family as for them economics governs the family and thus give them right to govern the others life such as of women of the household.

## **Chapter 6**

### **6. Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations**

#### **6.1. Summary and Conclusion**

The migration has profound effects not only for the left behind families but at national level too as there are some positive effects on state socio-economic structure. The ultimate outcomes of the migration are not only for the families at origin but also for the sending countries. The major contribution of the migration is in the form of the remittances and overseas Pakistani are always at the forefront in sending remittances back home. These remittances are not only helping in economic growth of country but also bringing positive changes in social spheres of society such as “women empowerment”.

The results unveiled that men in Gujrat prioritized migration as the source of livelihood for ample reasons. The foremost reason of male migration is lack of jobs and insufficient income generated from agricultural productivities. In pursue of dream wages, they preferred to migrate abroad to meet the basic needs of home. The differences of wages at country of origin and destination country is the push factor for migrants in Gujrat. The second reason counts the chain migration contingent on kinship structure and social capital of the migrant. The mobilization of one person increases the likelihood of mobilization of many other people from the same family as the person set a precedent of migration. He also become bridge between people at origin

country and destination country to facilitate them for provision of basic amenities in migrated country.

The relatively sumptuous lifestyle of migrant households in Gujrat also prompt other families in locale to send their family members abroad to upgrade their life standards.

International migration and the inflow of remittances could possibly be related with the women's empowerment in two ways; a) for those women who are living alone or as a proxy head in the absence of their husbands in the nuclear families and b) for those women who are living in a joint family with alternate head like brother of husband or father of husband. The women living in nuclear families are more autonomous when it comes to the small purchases and decision about the petty issues of families in comparison to those women who are living in joint families. The women in joint families doesn't have a proper say in all household affairs rather they are excluded from decision making processes. They don't have control over the remittances and hence they had to look at others to take money and decide about their consumption patterns.

The natal families of such women usually reach out to help them financially which render these women dependable to their parents' home to meet the needs. When it comes to the reception of remittances, in this case, the remittances are received by male members who allocate these to other with

their own ways. On the other hand, nuclear families give a free hand to women to plan the budget with the given remittances without any deterrents and accountability. In some cases, they consult their husbands in advance about the possible outlet to spend remittances but for the petty needs they don't even need their permission to consume. In gist, women in nuclear families exercise more authority over consumption patterns and hold more autonomy than women in joint families.

The results also address the issues of women left behind beget due to absence of their husbands. The negligence in children care and issues with in-laws intensified in absence of their migrated husbands.

## **6.2. Recommendations**

The current study was especial case in the district Gujrat where situation is very unique as most of the families still live in a joint family system and women had to spend most of the time in the absence of their husbands who are living and working abroad. They normally do take their wives alongside to the country of destination.

1. A comparative analysis in some other locations of Pakistan is required to verify the finding of the current study.

2. A quantitative study could be done to reassess the finding of current student whether these findings are generalizable or not.
3. A cross cultural explanation is also required.

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### **Interview Guide**

I am Sundas Ayyub, an M.Phil. Scholar at the Department of Development Studies, Pakistan Institute of Development Economics, Islamabad. I am conducting research on the topic “The Impact of Remittances on the Women's Empowerment: A Case Study of Gujrat”. You are selected as one of the respondents to get detailed information about the subject research. The information will only be collected for a research purpose and anonymity will be kept. I am thankful to you for your kind cooperation.

#### **Section 1. Demographic Profile**

Q.1. Name (Optional)\_\_\_\_\_

Q.2. Age

Q.3. Marriage time

Q.4. Family structure

Q.5. Number of family member including children

Q.6. Total family income

Q.7. Number of migrants from the family

Q.8. Destinations and years of migration of each migrant member

Q.9. Remittance contribution

Q.10. How many visits they pay normally each year.

Q.11. Why they migrate

Q.12 Who keep and distribute remittances.