**Rural social systems**

[Iftikhar Ahmad](https://dailytimes.com.pk/writer/iftikhar-ahmad-nipa/" \o "More Articles by Iftikhar Ahmad)

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Sociology is Study of Rural Social systems. It is about institutions and Life Styles, values and attitudes of the people in rural areas. Rural Sociology is all about Self-reliance, discovering Strengths, breaking and making rules to defeat vested interests, and resistance to change. The study requires vision, patience and a great sense of humor. It is by no means an easy path to walk on. It implies Social integration to build a nation and its character, based on justice and equity and fair play. We need to understand behaviors and needs of the people living in rural Pakistan. We need to know the issues (1) Emigration from village communities and (2) Suggested rural development strategy.

1. Impact of Migration on rural communities

An Interesting feature related to the migration behavior is that while the desire to earn money is understood as the prime reason behind the rural emigration, there is very little evidence that the earnings received through remittances are used for generating more income. “Money earned is not invested in any manner to produce more money”. The important uses of the money received are the construction of new house, extension and renovation of old houses, payment of old debts, purchase of consumer goods, pilgrimage to Mekka, marriages, ritual performances and festivities. In one of the village a respondent replied that the “migrants families left behind are almost exclusively interested in buying or constructing houses. Alternatively the money is spent on the occasions of marriage”. In any event it is obvious that most of the earnings are spent for non-productive purposes.

Contrary to all expectations one of the adverse effects of the additional income which is quite frequently reported by the respondent is that the excessive amount received by the family members of the migrants tends to decrease their interest in land cultivation and agriculture. Thus the agriculture suffers from neglect not only due to the removal of active working hands from the village but also because of the placement of agriculture into a secondary source of economy.

In the cases where control of money received through remittances is in the hands of males, and such villagers are quite a few in number, the condition of women has not changed for the better. In fact their feeling of deprivation was strong

In most of the villages that were included in the study, it was reported that migration from the village was a recent phenomenon. It started during the period of President Ayub khan (1958-68), gained momentum during 1970’s and reached its peak after 1977. The accelerated pace of migration is explained in terms of the commissioning of recruiting agencies by the government of Pakistan besides its own participation in the welfare program of the migrating laborers.

While migration, in general seems to be a phenomenon, several villages reported that the people started migrating out of their villages nearly 50 to 60 years ago. Some even recall that it started as far back as during the British rule. In a recent study conducted in Great Britain in the migrants from Pakistan it was noted that “there were few Pakistani in Britain in 1950. Small numbers began to arrive in the 1950s but figure was still under 20,000 in 1960, partly because of emigration restrictions in Pakistan. The common wealth immigration Act (1962) was brought into force on july1, 1962 and it was reported that 50,000 Pakistanis entered Britain to “beat-the ban”. The rush consisted mainly of young men whether migration started earlier or quite recently is beside the point. The effects of migration are based on observation shown from the contemporary society and particularly to those social and economic conditions that were prevailing in the village during the time of study.

The micro perspective of the study is contributive to our understanding that the village social structure is sure to change in nearest future. This change would be related to the introduction of material objects within the village in the first place and the attitudes of the villagers in the long run. An additional relevant factor to change in the village would be the new drive toward education among the boys and girls which has been made available to the villagers due to increase in their income and resources.

The migration has bestowed villagers a better standard of living. Expensive household articles, new furniture, foreign made crockeries and electrical items such as refrigerators, air conditioners, kitchen tools and even hair dryers are commonly found in the migrant households. It is invariably reported in the village that the migrant households can also afford better medical treatment, good food, better clothing’s and foreign made clothes for the household members. The migrant household is often reported to have better standard living as compare to those house hold from where no person has migrated.

In several villages the women have been found engaged in farm activates. In the absence of male members they supervised farming activities entrusted to hired labour force. That was an interesting change observed. Such as sowing cultivating and the harvesting of crops. The prolonged Absence of males has thus become instrumental in involving women in those areas of economic activities which were heretofore considered exclusive domains of the male. Natural effect of such involvement is going to be beneficial for upgrading female status in the village community. Furthermore it proves the importance of developing agriculture for national economy.

It was reportedly observed by the respondents that the social and the religious events in the village have been enlivened because of increased participation of women from the migrant families. Certain respondents yielded information which goes to establish that the world view of women must have also broadened. Their exposure to mass media and new means of communication, now readily available to them, and more importantly the increase in the their mobility to town, frequency of visits to movies and enhanced participation in leadership activities within the group of women have contributed substantially to provide new orientation to their personality. It is not surprising therefor that in certain villages women have been elected as councilors for the union council.

The inflow of money through remittances has improved the life style of the members of emigrant household in general and of the women in particular. The women appear well-dressed. They are also more active participants in social and religious events. Due to their changed position in the household women reportedly more active in playing the role of host when the relatives visit the household.

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While the migration has brought several advantages to the life in the village community. It is improbable that any assessment of the migration’s impact can be made without noticing its adverse impact. The migration of villagers is reported to have certain disintegrating effects on the life of the village community. It is not uncommon to notice that the migrant households have developed liking for the life in town. This has been made possible by the increase in the mobility of the migrant’s family. The family members now feel that the basic necessities cannot be fulfilled within the limited environment of the village. Thus, migration has, in many ways, introduced certain elements of dissatisfaction in the life of the community. There was need to seriously work on establishing modern villages to provide all comforts and facilities of urban centres / cities. Rural social systems must be allowed to function.

2. Suggested Rural Development strategy

Emigration from the village communities can be perceived to have both beneficial and adverse effects. In the matters of policy formulation toward rural development both of these perspectives are to be kept in view. It is obvious policy should aim at the neutralization of adverse effects of migration while reinforcing those areas of change which bring benefits to the community. To launch such a policy at the national level so that it could be uniformly applicable would not be an easy task. The measures to be adopted for making migration a beneficial activity would therefore call for a rigorous and intensive communication with the local communities. Some of the governing rules for evolving a national strategy for rural development can be as under.

The national resources of the country are enhanced by the inflow of huge foreign exchange remitted by the migrants. The study reveals that much of the incoming remittance are however, not utilized for productive purposes. This trend is indeed harmful for the country’s economy and the social habits of the village communities. Banking organizations which are the main channel for the transfer of money should be asked to launch a massive campaign for converting remittances to productive inputs into the economy of the village communities. Experts, in the areas of development, money usable for the community. In order to make development programmers exciting and meaningful the activities oriented toward augmentation of economic gains should be dovetailed by social and cultural activities. Thus such a programmer should include the use of a slight percentage of the incoming money for the social and ritual need of the migrant households.

Sociological and psychological aspects of families need to be addressed in the absence of male members having been away from home; working abroad children are neglected and can go astray and fall in company with many risks for families.

The reported consequences of prolonged of male is the emergence of household in which female are required to perform many, if not all, the roles of the male. This factor can be extremely consequential for the future of the family structure of the migrant households. Increased responsibilities are sure to result in the enhanced status of women in the family. Once enhanced it is quite logical to draw that it cannot be reduced. Thus, the enhanced status of the female is destined to bring about changes in the future families of rural communities. It seems that a turn has already being made in the direction of change. The policies should therefore be formulated to ease transition from traditions to modernity in the function and structure of family in the rural areas of Pakistan.

*The writer is the former director of National Institute of Administration (NIPA), Government of Pakistan*