



RURAL URBAN MIGRATION; SOCIO-CULTURAL CHANGES IN PAKISTAN- PREVENTIVE MEASURES TAKEN BY GOVERNMENT AND CIVIL SOCIETY TO CONTROL IT

Asma Seemi Malik

Assistant Professor
Lahore College for Women University
Lahore
PhD Scholar in the University of
Punjab, Lahore

Correspondence Address:
Asma Seemi Malik

Article received on:
09/01/2015

Accepted for publication:
20/04/2015

Received after proof reading:
02/06/2015

ABSTRACT... Movement towards the urban centers of a country has been found to be a common element in regards to the population dynamics. These dynamics however have a significant economic, cultural, political and social impact on the lives of not only the migrants but also the place of destination. Through this research, it has been studied as to how the rural urban movement in Pakistan impacts the social and cultural dimensions of the place of destination as well as those of the migrant. Furthermore, this research focused on findings the measures taken by the government to curb the issues, however has found that the government of Pakistan is not taking any notice at all of the issues that exist. There is no long term vision or policy, a plan or implementation that would help in keeping the society and cultural of urban and rural centers segregated.

Key words: Urban Migration, Role of Government in building a society, urban sprawl, urban migration in Pakistan

Article Citation: Malik AS. Rural urban migration; socio-cultural changes in Pakistan- preventive measures taken by government and civil society to control it. Professional Med J 2015;22(6):674-682.

Migration from rural to urban centers is a common phenomenon observed in the population all across the world and especially the developing countries. There are a number of reasons that lead to this migration primary of which is to find better sources of income. Similarly, there are a number of consequences of the rural to urban movement.

Pakistan now is a country that has been fluctuating for long between the points of being a developing country or an underdeveloped country. Nonetheless, the observed rural to urban migration rate in the country has been high which is evident from the massive expansion of urban centers of the country especially including Lahore, Islamabad and Karachi. According to Index Mundi,¹ the 2010 to 2015 estimate of the rate of urbanization in Pakistan has been 3.1%. Another interesting statistic reported by Index Mundi is that the net migration rate in the country that is (people entering the country – people leaving the country) stood for 2012 at -0.2% meaning that people are leaving Pakistan. This seems to be a reasonable movement considering the uncertain,

insecure and instable political, economic and social situation in the country. However this also means that i) people are leaving Pakistan and ii) those remaining are moving from the rural to urban centers at a rate of 3.1%. According to a research conducted on migration aspect, urbanization in developing and underdeveloped countries means that the demand of urban socio economic amenities is exceeding the supply which then automatically leads to a wide array of problems.²

Through this current study, the impact of the rural to urban migration in Pakistan will be analyzed upon the socio cultural changes in the country. This will be seen both in regards to the impact this movement has on the migrant him or herself and on the destination of migration. Furthermore, this research will be evaluating the role of the Pakistan government in this urban movement and what future situation seems to exist given the current trends.

For this, the objectives of this research are:

1. To identify the trends of rural urban migration in Pakistan for a period of 10 years starting

2001 to 2012.

2. To analyze the socio economic impacts of this rural urban migration
3. To evaluate what role the government of Pakistan is playing in monitoring, controlling and managing the urbanization rate and its impacts in the country

In order to conduct this research, data from PIDE, World Bank and Integrated Household Survey has been collected and analyzed. Furthermore, in order to look into the role of government a series of interviews have been conducted from the representatives of Ministry of Housing and Works, Ministry of Planning and Development, Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination and Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Resources. The data has been qualitatively analyzed under the light of the review of literature and trends of the rural urban movements.

Need for Research

The issue of rural urban migration and the resulting economic, social and demographic changes has been of significant focus on the literature. However much of the research has been focused upon China.^{3,4} Through this research, China has been able to decipher important findings of the demographic and transitional changes in their society and have been able to manage their population in an effective manner. Population is also an important and growing problem in Pakistan that needs effective policies and management. The issue however with Pakistan is that there is no enough literature available to influence the attention of the governmental policies towards this direction. Through this research, it is expected that a step will be taken towards understanding the population based movements of Pakistan in a better manner.

As has been noted earlier, there are no measures taken by the government to monitor the civil movements. This is even more of an issue given the security situations in the country, the uncertainty of the political and religious affiliations of any person in the country. Moreover, one important problem caused by the movements of Pakistani population is that poverty is a breeding ground for terrorism

as the terrorist organization incentivizes the poor people to create terror in return for money and naturally this turns into a bigger problem when the rural urban migration rate is high.

Through this research, the socio cultural elements that are affected by the urban sprawl will be determined and their trends in Pakistan will be analyzed.

Literature Review

According to one of the study⁵, in the last two decade, a significant degree of social and economic changes have been observed in the world. One of the major consequence and reason for this change has been the rural urban migration. In regards to the rural to urban migration process, few researchers note that rural to urban migration is an inherent part of the economic development process. There are a number of countries where the larger sets of populations still reside in the rural areas. One of these countries then is Pakistan. The residing of the larger population in the rural areas also means that the economies are i) underdeveloped and ii) the urban sprawl rates are high.

According to the researchers, "From a macroeconomic perspective, every country has its own distinct growth path, but the common feature is that as economic growth occurs, labor moves out of agriculture into the manufacturing and service sectors⁶."

In regards to Pakistan, this process has a major economic implication because Pakistan is still largely an agricultural country and that too a vastly traditional one. Manufacturing sector developed but has declined owing to the increase in energy crises and decrease in the foreign direct investment of the country. The service sector has grown sharply and largely, the country is moving towards saturation of the service sector. The issue with this situation however is that if people start moving out of the core business of the country, the impacts on the products of the country will be very negative. This will not only cause a decline in the exports of the country but will also make the commodities more expensive thus making the lives

of both urban and rural people both more difficult. Thus for a developing country like Pakistan where the growth of the country is spotted with a number of obstacles, it is vital that preventive policies be developed to manage urbanization.

An important consideration while looking at the case of urban sprawl is of why people migrate. According to a research and as per new economics of labor migration, migration from rural to urban areas is actually a household decision rather than an individual decision. According to the authors, migration is one of the household strategies developed to overcome the constraints that the household is facing.⁷ For example one of the research shows that the rural people do not find access to insurance and credit markets and consider that through these tools, their income prosperity is likely to increase and they are more likely to shift away from poverty but shifting to urban areas rather than staying in the rural ones.⁸

There is another reason for rural urban migration. According to the authors, there is a large difference between the productivity of sectors in the rural areas and those in the urban areas⁹. Because of this, labor tends to move out of the agriculture sector because they consider that by migrating into other sectors they will be producing more and thus will be earning more.

Some social scientists also¹⁰ have said that, "The gap between agricultural and non-agricultural productivity cannot be explained by differences in hour's worked, human capital, educational quality, cost-of-living differences, or factor shares. They find the gap between agricultural and non-agricultural productivity persists even accounting for all of these potential confounding factors."

According to this, two laborers working the same number of hours, with the same educational and skill levels will have very different returns for working in agriculture and non-agricultural sectors, where the non-agricultural sectors will be paying significantly more to the labor than the other thus motivating the laborer to invest the same amount of effort in another sector of

the economy which then is in the urban areas. The positive element of this is that more labor will be invested into more productive areas with the result that the overall economic conditions of the country will be improved as the produce of non-agricultural sectors will be larger giving the tradeoff to be lower. In this argument then, the migration should be encouraged and the employees should be invested in non-agricultural and high returning segments.

Some researchers also opined that the social change in the demographics of the rural and urban centers of China by considering the transition in the gender of the country. According to the authors, sons of a household are more likely to shift from the rural to the urban areas than are daughters.¹¹ The impact of this is that gender discrimination occurs in the urban and rural areas where the rural areas have more women and the urban areas have more men. It can be seen that the finding of the study is actually very applicable to the case of Pakistan as well where the daughters of a household are not typically considered to be the bread winners and are given the responsibility of marrying the person selected by their parents when it is the right time. It is true that gender equality is increasing in the country however its absolute levels in the country are still very low and most of the women of the country are found to be either house wives or to be living in the rural areas and investing their effort in the agricultural sector.

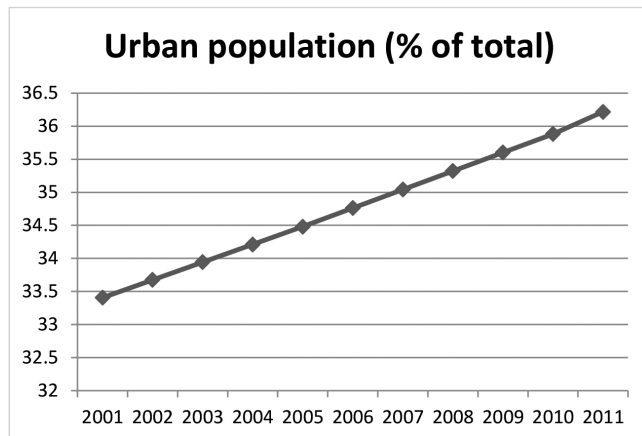
Finally, there is another study that takes up a very important element of the social and economic conditions in the country where the rural to urban migration is happening. The authors look at the health issues and the stress levels in the population owing to the urbanization. According to them, the interplay between the biological and psychological factors is complex.¹² There are a number of factors such as the cultural incongruence, cultural identity, religious beliefs and norms that impact the psychological acceptance of urbanization and the inflow of rural people. Thus the findings suggest that an increase in the rural to urban migration can have

a major impact on the overall levels of stress of the society as well as the number of people who are found to have biological ailments. This again being a disadvantage of urbanization to the society means that this urban sprawl needs to be curbed in the best possible manner.

Year	Urban population (% of total)
2001	33.4066
2002	33.6752
2003	33.9438
2004	34.2124
2005	34.481
2006	34.7612
2007	35.0414
2008	35.3216
2009	35.6018
2010	35.882
2011	36.2156

Trends of Rural Urban Migration in Pakistan

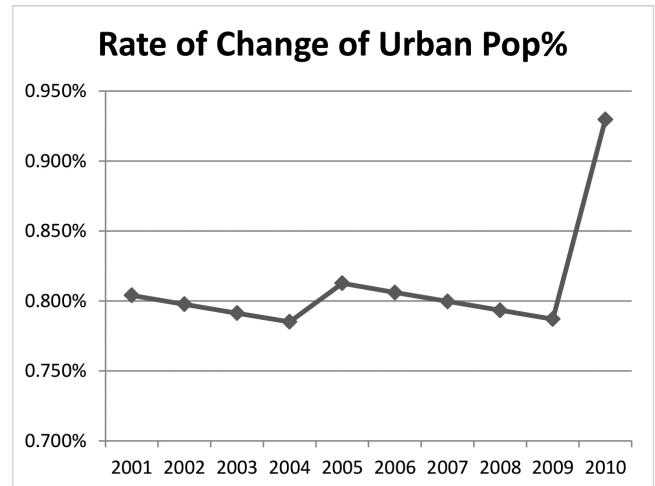
Looking at the trends of urbanization in Pakistan, the first important statistic is that of the urban population as a percentage of the total population.¹



From the graph and the table above, it can be seen that the urban population in the country has been on a significant increase for all of the three years. An extremely interesting observation is that there has not been a decline in the urban population in any year within the entire decade. Considering the fact that the urban residents are likely to have lesser children as compared to those people living in the rural areas, one important explanation of this increase in the urban population is that the people from the rural areas

are shifting to the urban centers of the country.

However, just noting the absolute change in urban population is not enough. The finding above makes it essential to look at the change of urban population percentage in the same years. The results for that as calculated are as follows:

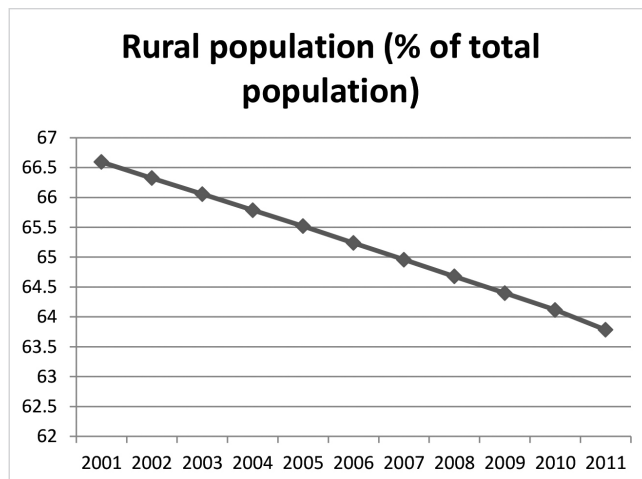


Year	Rate of Change of Urban Pop%
2001	0.804%
2002	0.798%
2003	0.791%
2004	0.785%
2005	0.813%
2006	0.806%
2007	0.800%
2008	0.793%
2009	0.787%
2010	0.930%
2011	0.930%

Looking at the change in the urban population percentage, it can be seen that in absolute the rate of urban population change has risen. There is a small decline in the change if rate of urban population from 2001 to 2004 and then from 2005 to 2009. Significant peaks are observed in 2005 and 2010. 2005 witnessed the great earthquake in a number of areas of Pakistan so that explains the movement in 2005 and the decline after 2005. The 2010 movement however can be related to the significantly adverse economic situation in the country marked by high levels of inflation, severe energy crises and shutting down of a

number of industrial areas near the rural areas of the country. Nonetheless, the finding is that the most significant change in the urban population has been observed in 2010 in which the focus of development of the urban centers and the major unemployment in the country led to the movement of the population. However, according to World Bank¹, the economic situation of the country currently is not much improved which depicts the fact that the people who travelled to the urban centers have not developed to any significant extent such that they will contribute positively to their own as well as to the country's social and economic development.

Along with the changes in the urban population in the country, next the trend of the rural population will be analyzed. The results for that are as follows:

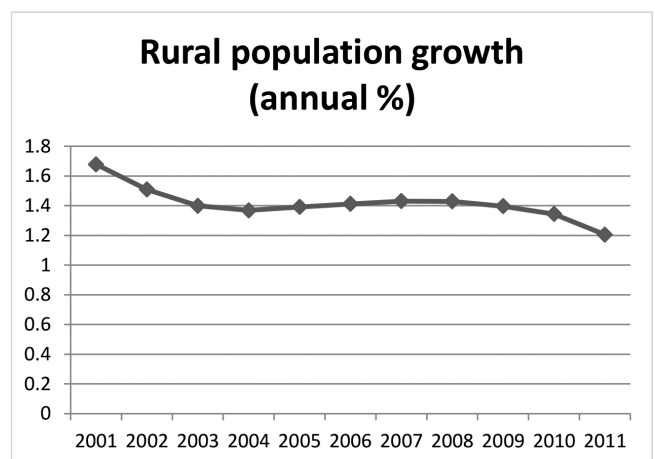


Year	Rural population (% of total population)
2001	66.5934
2002	66.3248
2003	66.0562
2004	65.7876
2005	65.519
2006	65.2388
2007	64.9586
2008	64.6784
2009	64.3982
2010	64.118
2011	63.7844

The rural population percentage of the country for the same years seems to be showing the same finding however in the opposite direction. The rural population in the country is moving

constantly declining from 2001 to 2011. This shows that the initial findings that of increase in urban population is complementary to the decline in the rural population. An interesting finding can be seen by looking at the two tables of urban population as well as rural population. It can be seen that the urban population has increased by almost 3% and this is the percentage by which the rural population has decreased which means that the rural population has actually shifted to the urban centers of the country making the urban centers more crowded and pressurized.

The same finding is further reinforced by the following rate of growth of rural population in Pakistan.



As can be seen from the chart above, the rural population growth has been declining from 2001, was constant from 2003 to 2009 and then took a declining trend again in 2010 and 2011. This suggests that even though the rural population may be growing, the rural population as a proportion of the total population is declining as it is shifting to the urban centers of the country.

Socio Cultural Impact of Migration – Destination

It has been determined that people for various reasons are leaving their rural homes and are coming to settle in the urban areas of the country. The question that this research has asked however is, what socio cultural impact this is having on the urban areas where these new people from different rural areas are coming in. In this regards, Abdullah¹ studying the urban sprawl

situation in Malaysia notes that this process significantly increases the competitiveness of the city as well as reduces the economic resources available per capita in the city. According to the author, in order to cater to the new demands of the cities, the government has to invest further in generating more employment opportunities, infrastructure, sanitation and hygiene facilities, education facilities and residential facilities. Thus, one impact that urbanization has on the destination is “further” development of the area. The government is forced to continue to develop the urban centers because of this trend of the population of leaving the rural areas and coming to the urban. Not being able to satisfy fully the needs of the urban centers makes it difficult for the governments to shift their focus to continually less populated rural areas.^{2,3}

Moving on, in regarding to the social situation of the destination city, one of the research also note the faith of many scholars that large scale migration is likely to result in ethnic conflicts. This is a phenomenon which is evidently observed in the metropolitan city of Karachi.⁴ The muhajirs, Pashtuns and the Urdu speaking ethnic groups are constantly seen to be waging a war against each other which by 2013 has led to the rise of issues such as target killing, kidnapping and protection money. Support this fact; Ikramullah and Shair⁵ share the findings that the number of murder cases in Karachi increased from 734 in 2006 to 1124 in 2008. A major social phenomenon in Karachi is that each group seeks to gain superiority of the city thus making it virtually impossible for the peace to settle in. In fact, according to Analyst⁶, peace in the city is not in the selfish interests of people who are earning from this unrest. One of the major factors of the situation of Karachi as it is today is the flocking of people from various rural areas into the city in search of occupation.

A recent observation from the city of Lahore has of the significant increase in the number of beggars on streets. These people flock to the city from different surrounding areas to earn whatever income they can. The impact of this is that the

overall society gets polluted and even people who are trying to work hard to make the errands meet are attracted towards this “flourishing” social evil of beggary. The children who could otherwise be going to government schools (getting whatever education they can) are seen begging for money. With this life on the roads, a number of other social evils are to follow for example one researcher conducts a study on the urbanization patterns of Malaysia and notes that whereas the cities grow through the process of urbanization, side effects such as rise in crime is also a major contribution of urbanization. The explanation for this is multifold. Firstly, some people solely travel to urban areas with the evil intention of robbery considering it to be easy money.⁷ Out of those who travel with a good intention but face misfortune in terms of finding an appropriate occupation and faced with the need to live in the expensive life of the city, find crime an easy way out of this. Not only are they likely to contribute to the levels of street crime, but also to the level of organized crime by being recruited into various mafias that exist in the cities. In this regard, one of the scientist says that if those coming to the new city are not getting proper opportunities for education or employment, they are more likely to get trapped in the terrorist activities.⁸

Socio Cultural Impact of Migration – Migrant

It has been seen that rural urban migration has a significant impact on the social and cultural dimensions of the destination. This has not only been studied through the observations from Pakistan but also reinforced from the literature available on the issue. The next question is of the impact that this migration has on the migrant him or herself. Travelling from the rural to urban areas, it is safe to assume that the individual is untrained and unskilled as compared to those living in the urban areas of the country. This means that firstly, the migrant will be finding it difficult to adjust to the new culture and social norms of the city. A major barrier for the rural people in Pakistan is that of language. Largely, the dialects of Punjabi, Sindhi, Balochi and Pashto vary significantly after some distance. In urban areas, the local languages have all largely been replaced by Urdu or English

(which the rural people are unlikely to be skilled at). The impact of this is that it is difficult for the new individual to find the right space for him or herself in the city with not being able to communicate properly. This problem naturally is significantly aided, if the migration is targeted or sponsored. For example a number of people belonging to the elite classes are observed to bring house workers from their rural backgrounds to work in the city. This occurs in the mutual benefit of both the sponsor and the migrant as one is provided with trustworthy and in control worker and the other is provided with income. This sponsorship however is limited and the sprawl is mostly individualistic and self-determined in nature.

On the other hand, there is another study in which researcher is of the opinion that movement out of the rural areas in a developing country is actually one of the ways through which the economy can regenerate. In fact, he terms rural migration as a “prerequisite” for economic regeneration as through this, the young adults leaving the rural areas can acquire the necessary skills and experience that is necessary for endogenous development of the nation.⁹ Stockdale also notes that migration also is positively related to the rate of entrepreneurship in the country as the young adults learning from the urban experience are likely to invest for providing goods, services or facilities to the rural areas. The assumption of young adults has been found to be supported in the works of many of the researchers that from untrained individuals, that are liability to the society (especially in a country that does not provide quality government based education) are trained to input through their human capital not only in the urban areas where they are living but also the rural areas in the form of the knowledge, skill and ideas that they take back home.^{10,11}

The cultural impact on the migrant is that he or she adopts the “city” lifestyle. The living standard improves and mostly people coming from rural areas, having lived in the urban centers are not willing to travel back to their old and facility less lifestyles.

Role of Government

Through the series of primary data that was collected for the purpose of evaluating the role of government in dealing with the rural urban migration situation, the general idea found was that the government overall has much more to deal with at the moment than influencing people to stay in the rural places rather than shifting to urban areas. From the ministry of planning and development, it was found that even though there are regulations existing that require the government agencies and the civil society not to let people develop slums, it has been constantly witnessed over the years that the slums have increased significantly. This is the reason that government has failed to implement the developed regulations on the issue of urban slums. The issue has been furthered worsened by the lack of initiatives to develop the rural areas so as to give the people reason and a chance to develop their lives in their local areas. This is supported by the conclusion of one of the study, according to which the mere existence of excess labor in the rural areas is not enough to explain the urban migration and that there is a deeper underlying social issue that contributes to the movement of these rural people to the urban areas.¹² For example, the lack of education and health facilities in the rural areas force the rural people to come to the urban areas in order to get their children trained and the sick treated.

The government agencies in this regards are also not found to have the machinery to monitor the number and identity of people who are coming and leaving countries. Considering the security situation of the country overall, this seems to be a major drawback in the machinery and performance of the government. Finally, the government is found to be lacking a long term vision as to what it wants from the urban and rural settings of the country overall. This is a major drawback on the part of the ministry for planning and development because technically it did not plan anything keeping into account the population growth and the urban sprawl of the country.

The recommendation for the government firstly is that it develops a long term policy that supports

the urbanization monitoring and tries to provide as much facilities to the rural people as possible so as to control the movement into the urban areas.

CONCLUSION

Conclusively, it has been seen that the trend of moving from rural to urban areas in Pakistan has increased tremendously over the years 2001 to 2011. The increase has largely been continuous in nature leading to crowdedness in the urban centers and a decline in the per capita resources available in the cities. The focus of this research however was to see the impact of the rural urban migration rather than the drivers of rural urban migration and through the observations made from the cities of Pakistan as well as the literature available on the issue.

It has been seen that urbanization in Pakistan is largely going unchecked and there is massive expansion of cities especially including Karachi, Lahore and Islamabad however Karachi considering its political and security situation has started facing a decline in the people who are willing to shift to the city. Through this urbanization, one research supports that the economy is more likely to regenerate however other researcher says that this is likely to increase issues such as crime.^{21,23} In the case of Pakistan, the social impact of urbanization has been the increase in infrastructure investment in the cities. Government critics are often observed saying that the government is only focusing on the development of already developed cities in the country. However with the increase in the people flowing into the cities and then the resultant decrease in the available facilities and resources is a major reason for the continuous development of urban areas. With the rising urbanization, there is both benefits and costs associated which makes it essential for the government to make long term policies and implementation plans to control and monitor the issue in the most effective manner.

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“Be brave.
Take risks.
Nothing can substitute experience.”

Paulo Coelho

