Rural Migration to Urban Areas and Its Impacts on Population: A Sociological Investigation in Hyderabad, Sindh, Pakistan

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Migration has considered to be one of the major concern of developing as well as developed nation, causing over population but it has also been deemed to be the source of development in terms of employment, better health facilities and the education. This research mainly explores the demographic, socio-economic and the impacts of rural urban migration in district Hyderabad, Sindh, Pakistan. This study included the quantitative data analysis to gather data from 400 respondents (200 rural, 200 urban) through structured survey. Further the data was analyzed using SPSS software. The results highlight that younger, more educated individuals are the primary migrants, with 50% of urban migrants aged 18-25 and 45.5% possessing higher education qualifications. The main motivator for migration was employment opportunities, identified by 53% of urban migrants. However, challenges such as underemployment and housing shortages were significant, with mean scores of 4.5 and 4.2, respectively. Rural areas face issues of depopulation, aging populations, and economic stagnation as a result of the migration of working-age individuals. While migration promotes urban growth, it also increases rural vulnerability and places strain on urban infrastructure. The findings suggest that to address these challenges, policies should focus on regional development, improving rural employment opportunities, enhancing urban infrastructure, and fostering rural sustainability. These strategies can help manage migration's dual effects and promote balanced, inclusive development.

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Introduction

Migration of local people from rural to urban areas has considered to be an important tendency affecting the distribution of population cultural trend social system and the economy at greater extent (Harsono et al., 2024). This process involves the migration of people or families from rural areas to urban centers, primarily due to differences in

opportunities and quality of life (Khoso et al., 2024; Shah et al., 2021). This trend of erosion is often seen as a response to the imbalance between rural stagnation and urban economic growth, and has domestic implications for sending and receiving areas (Khushi et al., 2024). Social investigations of this phenomenon highlight its multi-dimensional nature, encompassing economic, social, cultural, and demographic aspects (Ying et al., 2024). The main cause of migration from one area to another area is most probably deemed to be the cause of economic breach between areas.   (Daraz et al., 2024; Ansari et al., 2022). Considering pull factors like better education, unemployment hurdles, medical facilities, proper social facilities as well as underdeveloped infrastructure force local people from rural areas to transfer in pursuiting of better opportunities and lifestyle. (Iqbal et al., 2024). Urban centers, on the other hand, offer industrial jobs, better educational facilities, and access to healthcare facilities, which become a powerful sprinkler factor (Khoso et al., 2022). These dynamics are well described in Todaro's leap model, which links the decision to relocate to the potential economic benefits of urban employment (Todaro, 1969). However, the reality often diverges from expectations, as urban migrants frequently encounter challenges such as underemployment, informal housing, and social marginalization (Semprebon et al., 2022). The demographic impact of rural-to-urban migration is significant, altering population structures in both rural and urban regions (Niva et al., 2024). Rapid urbanization has led to burgeoning population densities in cities, creating challenges for housing, transportation, and public services (Lombard, 2014). While, cities most of the time face many problems and struggles in terms of accommodation due to over population, sometimes resulting in informal living standards and overburden regarding infrastructure (Tacoli et al., 2012). Conversely, rural areas experience population decline and demographic aging, exacerbating socio-economic inequalities. The influx of young and economically active individuals leaves a population in rural areas that will not be able to sustain agricultural production or support the local economy, making the low growth of rural areas more intense (Lipton 1980; de brauw, 2019). Socially, migration from villagers to the city affects traditional family structures and community networks (Eliasson et al. 2015). Immigrants further face hurdles in connecting with urban environment in terms of cultural adoption and social gatherings habitually noticed at greater extent. In addition, references sent to rural families can change social variables and patterns of dependence while economically beneficial (Selod & Shilpi, 2021). These changes reflect the complex interplay of economic variables and social outcomes, which requires a critical social perspective to fully understand (Lipton, 1980). The theoretical foundations of migration from rural to city, such as Lewis's two-sector model (1954), provide a framework for analyzing its socio-economic aspects. This model describes the migration of workers from subsistence agriculture to urban industrial sectors as a sign of social change (Braithwaite, 2019). Similarly, the New Economic Resilience Theory (NELM) emphasizes the role of family and community, making adoption decisions collaborative and hierarchical (Nelms & Moarer, 2014). These perspectives highlight that policy interventions are necessary that address both the causes and effects of flooding, in order to minimize its adverse impact on rural and urban populations.

Therefore, the researcher is of the opinion to highlight the sociological aspects of migration from rural to city areas, relying on its origin cultural trends demographic distribution, economic hurdles as well as social dimensions on both areas. By synthesizing empirical data and theoretical insights, the study aims to contribute to the understanding of migration's role in shaping population trends and inform policies aimed at sustainable development in rural and urban contexts.

Methodology

The main objective of this research was to investigate the dimensions of migration from rural to urban area mainly focusing on the demographic effects on rural as well as urban areas from sociological point of view. Besides that, the research involved the quantitative method for data collection to explore the meaning of the migration and its consequences. Therefore, the study involved primary data collection process from 400 respondents of district Hyderabad including four talukas (200 rural, 200 urban), to determine the migration reasons and the broader social, economic, and demographic impacts or the rural urban migration.

Data Collection and Sample Size

Primary Data Collection:

Surveys: The researcher involved the structured questionnaire with multiple options as well as likert scale to gather the perception and information with regards to the objective of the research from two groups including rural residents (those who are potential migrants) and those who already migrated to urban areas. The survey covered socio-economic background, reasons for migration, integration challenges in urban environments, and the socio-economic impacts of migration on rural communities. Questions explored motivations such as employment, education, and access to services, as well as challenges related to housing and employment in urban areas.

Interviews: For the interviews, the research involved structured interviews using valid questionnaire as an instrument. The interviews were conducted from the local people (those who just migrated and those already living in that area) such as local villagers, stakeholders and the people living in the urban areas.

Sample Size and study area: Sample size for the study was targeted 400 respondents including 200 rural and 200 urban as a respondents through surveys. The study involved district Hyderabad consisting four talukas (Qasimabad, Latifabad, Rural Hyderabad and Urban Hyrderabad). The rural sample will include individuals who have either migrated in the past or are planning to migrate, while the urban sample will focus on people who have settled in urban areas in the past five years.

Data analysis
The study focused on the quantitative parameters, where SPSS software was employed to find out the frequency, percentage, minimum, maximum, mean and standard deviation.

Results

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of respondents

Characteristic	Rural Respondents (n=200)		Urban Migrants (n=200)	
Age Range	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
18-25	66	33%	100	50%
26-40	83	41.5%	60	30%
41-60	39	19.5%	30	15%
60+	12	6%	10	5%
Gender				
Male	130	65%	120	60%
Female	70	35%	80	40%
Education Level				
Uneducated	40	20%	17	8.5
Primary Education	76	38%	31	15.5%
Secondary Education	46	23%	61	30.5%
Higher Education	38	19%	91	45.5%
Employment Status				
Employed	62	31%	95	47.5%
Unemployed	84	42%	20	10%
Self-business	54	27%	85	42.5%

This table-1 illustrates the demographic profile of rural respondents and urban migrants. It shows that 50% of urban migrants are in the 18-25 age range, compared to 33% of rural respondents, indicating a higher proportion of younger individuals migrating to urban areas. In contrast, the rural population has a larger concentration in the 26-40 age group, with 41.5% of rural respondents falling into this category compared to 30% of urban migrants. Gender-wise, 65% of rural respondents are male, while 60% of urban migrants are male, demonstrating a small difference in migration by gender. Regarding educational background, a significant difference is observed: 45.5% of urban migrants have higher education, while only 19% of rural respondents possess similar qualifications, suggesting that more educated individuals are migrating for better prospects. Employment status shows that 47.5% of urban migrants are employed, higher than the 31% of rural respondents, while rural respondents have a higher unemployment rate at 42%. Furthermore, 42.5% of urban migrants are self-employed, indicating that many migrants in urban areas turn to entrepreneurship. These findings reveal that rural-to-urban migration primarily involves younger, more educated individuals in search of employment opportunities, and that urban areas tend to attract those seeking better economic conditions.

Table 2: Reason of migration from rural to urban area

Reason for Migration	Rural Respondents (%)		Urban Migrants (%)	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Employment Opportunities	84	42%	106	53%
Access to Better Education	42	21%	44	22%
Better Healthcare Facilities	29	14.5%	21	10.5%
Family Reunification	13	6.5%	6	3%
Quality of Life / Urban Amenities	25	12.5%	19	9.5%
Other (e.g., marriage, adventure)	7	3.5%	4	2%

This table-2 shows the main reasons for migration among rural respondents and urban migrants. Employment opportunities are the leading motivator for migration, with 53% of urban migrants and 42% of rural respondents citing it as their primary reason. This highlights that both groups are largely driven by the pursuit of better job prospects. Access to better education is another key factor, reported by 22% of urban migrants and 21% of rural respondents. However, fewer urban migrants (10.5%) compared to rural respondents (14.5%) list better healthcare facilities as a primary reason for moving. Family reunification is more important for rural respondents (6.5%) than urban migrants (3%), suggesting a stronger connection to family ties in rural areas. Quality of life and access to urban amenities are also reasons for migration, with 12.5% of rural respondents and 9.5% of urban migrants citing these factors. Lastly, other reasons, such as marriage or personal exploration, account for a smaller percentage of migration decisions. Overall, the primary drivers of rural-to-urban migration are employment and education, while healthcare and family connections remain significant, especially in rural areas.

Table 3: Challenges Faced by Urban Migrants

Items	No	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
Underemployment (Mismatch of Skills & Jobs)	200	1.00	5.00	4.5	1.2
Housing Issues (Rent, overcrowding)	200	1.00	4.00	4.2	0.8
Social Exclusion (Cultural alienation)	200	2.00	4.00	3.4	1.1
Access to Healthcare	200	1.00	5.00	3.2	1.3
Transportation Issues	200	1.00	5.00	3.5	1.2
Other (e.g., discrimination, security)	200	2.00	5.00	3.4	1.8

Likert scale instrument for conducting the perception based study is common in social science research. Therefore, the researcher involved 5 point Likert scale where 1 shows strongly disagree and 5 shows strongly agree. The data in table-3 shows that underemployment, with a mean score of (4.5) and a standard deviation of (1.2), is the most pressing issue. This indicates a significant gap between the migrants' skills and the job opportunities available in urban areas. As mentioned in literature that the housing issues including rents and the vacancies are also notable where, the rents are high and create the hurdles already in living residents with a mean score of (4.2) and a standard deviation of (0.8), interrogating the hurdles in obtaining affordable and suitable accommodation. Social exclusion, or cultural alienation, was reported with a mean score of (3.4), suggesting that many migrants face challenges in adapting to urban environments, as reflected in the standard deviation of (1.1). Access to healthcare scored a mean of (3.2) with a standard deviation of (1.3), showing that healthcare services are often insufficient or difficult for migrants to access. Transportation problems, with a mean score of (3.5) and a standard deviation of (1.2), point to difficulties in navigating urban transit systems. Lastly, other challenges, such as discrimination and security concerns, scored (3.4) on average, indicating that migrants often face additional obstacles related to social integration and safety. Overall, the results demonstrates the challenges due to migration of rural people to urban areas specifically, economic, social, cultural as well as living standards.

**Table 4: Impact of Migration on Rural Communities**

Items	No	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
Depopulation (Loss of young working-age people)	200	1.00	5.00	4.3	1.2
Economic Stagnation (Decline in local agriculture)	200	1.00	5.00	4.7	1.3
Aging Population	200	1.00	5.00	4.1	1.6
Increased Dependence on Remittances	200	1.00	5.00	3.8	0.8
Social Disintegration (Loss of community ties)	200	1.00	5.00	3.6	0.9

Migration not only affects the urban population but also the rural residents which was further inquired on the Likert scale. This table-4 presents that, economic stagnation, with a mean score of (4.7) and a standard deviation of (1.3), is the most significant impact, showing that the departure of younger workers leads to a decline in local agricultural productivity and overall rural economic activity. Depopulation, particularly the loss of young, economically active individuals, follows closely with a mean score of (4.3) and a standard deviation of (1.2), illustrating how the outmigration of young people leaves rural areas with fewer resources to sustain economic activities. The aging population also poses a major challenge, scoring (4.1), with a higher standard deviation of (1.6), indicating concern over the growing number of elderly individuals who are unable to contribute to the workforce. An increase in dependence on remittances, with a mean of (3.8) and a standard deviation of (0.8), highlights the increasing reliance on financial support from migrants, further emphasizing the economic strain on rural communities. Finally, social disintegration, with a mean score of (3.6), reflects the weakening of community ties as migration disrupts traditional social structures. These findings highlight the adverse socio-economic effects of rural-to-urban migration and the challenges faced by rural areas in maintaining both economic stability and social cohesion.

Table 5: Comparison of Urban and Rural Population Structures (before and after migration)

Population Structure	Rural (Pre-Migration)	Urban (Post-Migration)
Total Population	500,000	3,000,000
Youth Population (Under 25)	25%	30%
Working-Age Population (25-60)	50%	55%
Elderly Population (60+)	25%	15%
Migration Rate	N/A	20%

This table-5 compares the population structure of rural and urban areas before and after migration. The rural population of 500,000 consists of 25% youth (under 25), 50% working-age individuals (25-60), and 25% elderly (60+). Following migration, the urban population grows to 3,000,000, with 30% youth, 55% working-age individuals, and 15% elderly. The migration rate in urban areas is 20%, indicating that a significant portion of the rural population has moved to cities. This migration leads to a higher percentage of youth in urban areas, suggesting that younger individuals are more likely to migrate. The proportion of working-age people also increases in urban areas, while the elderly population decreases, highlighting the trend of younger, economically active individuals moving to cities, leaving rural areas with an aging population. These shifts emphasize the demographic changes caused by migration, with urban areas experiencing growth in both population size and the workforce, while rural areas face a decline in youth and an increase in the elderly population.
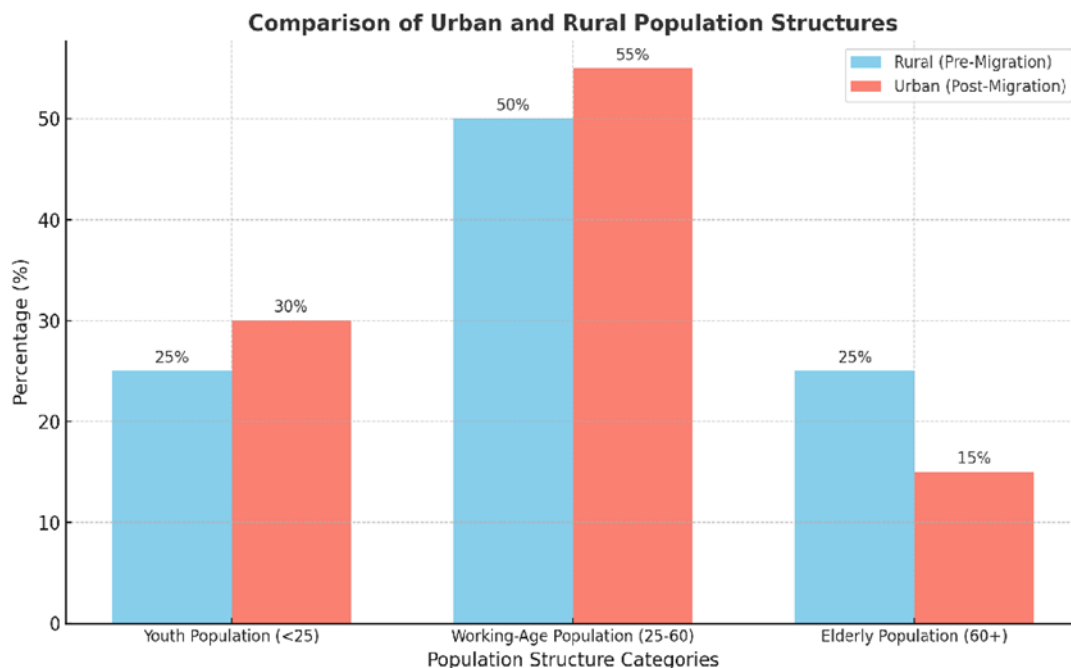
Fig 1: Comparison of urban and rural population structures

The figure-1 compares the demographic distribution of rural and urban populations across three categories: youth (under 25), working-age individuals (25-60), and elderly individuals

(60+). In rural areas, prior to migration, 25% of the population is classified as youth, 50% falls within the working-age group, and 25% is elderly. Post-migration, in urban areas, the percentage of youth rises to 30%, working-age individual's increase to 55%, and the elderly population decreases to 15%. These changes suggest that migration primarily involves younger, economically active individuals moving to urban areas, which leads to a higher proportion of working-age people in cities. Meanwhile, rural areas experience a shift towards an older population due to the outmigration of younger individuals, further contributing to demographic challenges in rural regions. This pattern highlights the dynamic shift in population structure resulting from rural-to-urban migration.

Table 6: Factors Affecting Social Integration of Migrants in Urban Areas

Factor Affecting Social Integration	No	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
Cultural Alienation (Language, customs)	200	1.00	5.00	3.9	2.1
Economic Barriers (Unemployment/Underemployment)	200	1.00	5.00	4.2	1.9
Access to Social Networks/Community	200	1.00	5.00	4.1	1.5
Housing and Living Conditions	200	1.00	5.00	4.7	0.9
Discrimination (Ethnic or rural prejudice)	200	1.00	5.00	3.8	1.3

The table-6 outlines several factors that influence the social integration of migrants, measured on a 1 to 5 scale. Among these, Cultural Alienation (including language and customs) shows a mean of (3.9) with a standard deviation of (2.1), reflecting moderate challenges migrants face in adapting to new cultural environments. Economic Barriers, such as unemployment or underemployment, have a mean of (4.2) and a standard deviation of (1.9), indicating that financial constraints are a significant obstacle to social integration. The factor of Access to Social Networks and Community ranks next with a mean of (4.1) and a standard deviation of (1.5), emphasizing that the availability of supportive networks plays a crucial role in easing integration. Housing and Living Conditions have the highest mean score of (4.7) and a standard deviation of (0.9), highlighting how inadequate housing conditions strongly hinder integration. Lastly, Discrimination based on ethnicity or rural origin has a mean of (3.8) and a standard deviation of (1.3), underscoring that migrants face considerable challenges due to prejudice. The findings suggest that while all factors contribute to migration-related challenges, issues such as poor housing and economic barriers have the greatest impact on the ability of migrants to successfully integrate into urban societies.

Discussion

This study provides important insight into migration from day to day, confirming and advancing earlier studies on its demographic and socio-economic impacts. Migration is mostly done by young people and well-educated people, where 50 per cent of the citizens are aged 18-25 years and 45.5 per cent have higher educational qualifications. These models fit with Todaro's (1969) model, which links migration to potential economic benefits in urban areas. Employment opportunities have emerged as a major driver of migration, mentioned by 53 percent of urban migrants, who support Lewis's (1954) theory that the excess wages of rural areas are absorbed into industrialized cities. However, significant issues persist, where a

large number of migrants exhibit low employment and residential difficulties, with average scores of 4.5 and 4.2, confirming Hardee's (2014) observations regarding urban pressure.

Rural areas also face severe consequences, such as a decline in population and an increase in the number of older people. This is evident from the exodus of 41.5 per cent of the economically active group of 26-40 years, resulting in a decline in agricultural production and economic stagnation. These results are consistent with Ojong et al (2018) claim that rural areas' lack of development worsens with older people. In addition, splitting on referrals with an average score of 3.8 has become an important survival strategy for rural households, reflecting changes in economic dependence. Notably, rural migrant further faces hindrances in terms of cultural adoption as well as social inequalities, where the cultural stranger's score is 3.9. This is contradicted by (Bautdinova, 2022) claim that emissions and adaptation problems are common among climbers. These results interrogate the policies required resuscitate the rural communities, promoting inclusive population in one area frustrate the twin effects of erosion.

Conclusion

From the results analysis and the perceptions of local residents, the research concludes that the migration has been deemed to be the problematic if not considered well in terms of social, economic, cultural and the living styles. The migration of young people and educated people in search of better opportunities helps urban economic development, but at the same time leads to population decline and economic stagnation in rural areas. Urban areas also have their own problems, such as inadequate infrastructure, underemployment, and difficulties in incorporating marginalized people into the social and economic system. Rural areas, on the other hand, face wage shortages, aging population growth, and increased dependence on referrals, which affect local economies and social structures. These results reflect a two-way nature of migration, driven by aspirations for economic betterment, but exacerbating injustice in both areas. Addressing these challenges requires wisdom and inclusive policies that promote regional equity and sustainable development.

Recommendations

In order to overcome the challenges posed by the migration from the villagers to the city, it is necessary to improve regional development. For this, there is a need to create employment opportunities and improve rural infrastructure, so as to reduce the trend of migration. Better planning is essential for urban areas, including providing affordable housing and improving public amenities, as well as initiating programs to promote social cohesion of the marginalized people. Promoting modern agriculture, implementing schemes to retain the young population in the area, and effective use of deliveries can be important steps to strengthen rural areas. Finally, it is necessary to collect robust sediment data and conduct competitive studies to develop effective policies that ensure balanced development between rural and urban areas and reduce the gap.

Limitations

The research has some limitations including, the sample size and the study area. As the sample size is limited to inquire while the case study provides the limitation for study. SO for the study was further aimed at the rural urban impacts on population in general, while it could

further contribute more significances if it has further been investigated in terms of economic at greater extent. Besides that, the in-depth interviews could enhance the study more and could make it more reflective to gain in-depth information. Lastly, the policies should be studied for the betterment of the society.

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