

# BREAKING THE TRADITION: A STUDY OF MIGRATION IN THE BIG CITIES OF PAKISTAN

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## **Abstract**

This study has been designed to investigate the problems of the migrants' parents for upbringing of their children. The process of intergenerational transmission was a major problem in the migrant's family. The families that had rural areas background and were settled in the big cities of Pakistan, their gender specific roles and social control of patriarchal authority was reducing by women, particularly for the first and the second generation women. It was observed in the present study that the cultural phenomenon had undergone important transformation. Traditionally, women were considered the custodians of the culturally specific values and family customs but interaction with cosmopolitan culture has brought many changes among them. Resultantly, the second-generation mothers supported their daughters' wishes for their independence. *Consequently long established roles fundamental to the cultural survival of the community continue being displayed, so, safeguarding the symbolic continuation of tradition.* The analysis of this complex phenomenon became the base of this paper. This analysis was carried out basing on a wider qualitative research investigating the cultural identity transmission in two generations living in the big cities of Pakistan (Lahore, Islamabad and Faisalabad). Forty-eight individuals participated in the study, 24 of which belonged to migrant generation and the other 24 belonged to the second generation (8 from each city for each generation). Thus, Probit model analysis proves that the second generation of the migrants have significantly improved the education, economic, social autonomy, health care services and decision-making power which had reduced the patriarchal authority.

**Key words:** Cultural transmission, Family, Gender roles, Probit, Migration.

## **Introduction**

Family is a basic institution which is closely associated with the process of socialization. In the family, the children are not only born but they also start their primary socialization i.e., learning the customs, role models, values and the norms of the society they live in. At the same time, it is within the family that the cultural transmission and participation take place. Through the family, the individual form an exclusively biological being, becomes a member of certain social group and acquires set of norms and values and learns how to make decision for himself and to liaise with multiplicity of other agents of socialization (school, peer group, mass media and the state) that sooner or later will involve them (Robertson, 1987). These norms and values are strongly linked up to historical, social and economic events, which through the

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centuries have shaped individuals' attitudes toward childcare, old members in the family, processes of departure from the parental home, marriage, the position of the women within the family and the society, the religion and so on. These norms and values have developed strong family system in the Pakistani society. Reher (1998) explains that some areas of the Western world (i.e., Mediterranean) appear characterized by strong family ties, while other areas (i.e., Northern Europe) would see weak family ties as prevalent. According to Reher's classification of family ties, people of Italian origin, living in UK, originate from a country socially and historically founded on more pervasive familial bond, which should be expected of family system to differ from the British family system.

Within this complex system, gender, being a very significant dimension of cultural identity, plays a very important role in the complex choices of individuals living in the most appropriate socio-cultural settings. In particular, in migratory context, it is likely that old migrant's attachment to cultural practices and beliefs of the place of origin can increase the generation gap between the parents and the children through the emphasis of cultural difference between them. This difference is usually even more pronounced in the case of female members of the family. Traditionally, women are considered the custodians of the culturally specific ethnic values and family customs (Baldasser, 1999, Pederaza, 1991). Due to this, within some migrants' communities, young women could be at the receiving end of a double standard of upbringing, which privileges the independence of the male counterpart within the family and outside the world. The double standard affecting the female offspring of migrant as member of their own family which maintain the society is often perceived unjust and can be difficult to reconcile with. Due to this double standard, the situation of women in the urban areas (32.5%) in general and rural areas (67.5 %) (Census, 1998) in particular, is not very satisfactory. In most of the areas of Pakistan, the culture of patriarchy is deeply entrenched and gender biases are perpetuated by men and women as a part of the social order. Due to this, there is rampant poverty, unemployment, ill health, violence, widespread exclusion of women and gender discrimination in all walks of life. Even the basic minimum needs are not being sufficiently met. The women's access to health and education in almost all the rural areas is inadequate

and discriminating. A complex web of cultural, social, and economic factors interacts to accord the women a low status. These factors and many more intersect with rigidly defined and enforced gender rules to create a vicious circle of discrimination and deprivation. The social environment, the time and the circumstance, however, changed through migration in the big cities of Pakistan. And that is the possible reason that why the migrant women are still struggling for achieving the goals of women empowerment and development in the Pakistani society. Therefore, empowered women define their attitudes, values and behavior in relation to their own real interests. They claim their freedom. Empowered women respond as equal and cooperate in order to work toward common good. They use their talents to live fulfilling lives. They are able to maintain strength in the presence of pressures and contribute towards the empowerment of others. They define their values and formulate their beliefs themselves. It is a process that enables women to gain access to and control material as well as information resources. According to Pillai (1995), "Empowerment is an active multidimensional process which enables women to realize their full identity and powers in all the spheres of life."

### ***Methods and Procedure***

The analysis of this complex phenomenon is the base of this paper, based on a wider qualitative research investigating the cultural identity and transmission in two generations in the big cities of Pakistan. Forty-eight Individuals participated in the study, 24 of them belonged to migrant generation and the other 24 belonged to the second generation. The ethnographic material on which this article was based collected during the year 2006 through semi-structured interviews and focus group studies. The data of the present research were comprised both the qualitative and quantitative form. The quantitative variables were five but binary variables were numerous. In the presence of so many binary variables, the Probit Analysis technique was used to draw the inferences. Probit model equation is specified as below:

$$\text{IMD} = b_0 + b_1 \text{LHOLD} + b_2 \text{MINAM} + b_3 \text{EDU} + b_4 \text{AGE} + b_5 \text{FAMSIZ} \\ + b_6 \text{SOT} + b_7 \text{SOCAPT} + b_8 \text{SANT} + b_9 \text{WOEMP} + b_{10} \text{POLTP}$$

### ***Results and Discussion***

The main purpose of this paper was to set out the relationship between women's empowerment and patriarchal authority by the

qualitative and quantitative methods. Empirical analysis of the interviews, focus groups' findings and observations in the field showed that some migrants had managed to accept certain ideas on roles and duties from their place of origin to the destination and applied them to their own families. Although some of the migrants' women interviewed who had found independence from the patriarchal structure of their families of origin, as soon as they were married within the city they were automatically swallowed up in the traditional rule by the same patriarchal norms to which they were subjected to prior to their migration. Medaglia (2001) investigated the Italian community in Britain that Italian families seemed to be characterized by strong patriarchal structure. They also seem to have undergone a slower transformation than the families in Italy which - in comparison - appear to be more dynamic. This paper not only strengthens this point but also adds a new aspect to this issue by identifying emerging trend for change within the family of migrants having settled in the big cities of Pakistan which were currently covert by its main actors.

### ***Gendered Roles and Double Standard***

The roles men and women of the first migrants' generation appear to be much gendered i.e. they show clear-cut gender-base distinctions, based on the reference to specific sets of norms and values applicable to female or male member of the family. As stated by Fortier (2000), the gender is the central vehicle of the mobilization of the family and generations in the collective re-enactment and display of the cultural continuity. It is modality through which young migrants, male and females participate in the communal expression of local particularity.

Within some migrants' communities in the big cities of Pakistan, where the women were, and still are, in charge of the house and child care, men contribute to the running of their families. Their children, however, although belong to the second generation during the interview stated that they felt still subjected to the same old norms and values. Their upbringing is taking place along the traditional pattern of a patriarchal system, which was often defined as very strict especially if compared to their native peer. The second-generation female respondents reported that they had performed the role of acting mother from a very early age; in the absences of their mother, they had to do cleaning, ironing and cooking food for the other family members. In contrast, no

routine tasks seem to have been assigned to the male counterpart in the family, whose activities were mainly limited to occasional jobs around the house. Bowes *et al.* (1997) observed that household work represents a significant area for the transmission of cultural values, which differ from country to country, region to region and even within the country, in relation to expectations, gender and socio-economic class. Moreover, as among the respondents family control over the girls was stronger, most second generation girls were not allowed to spend much time unsupervised. Many of them were spending most of their time at home or at the homes of friends or relatives, so reinforcing the link with the culture of origin.

### ***Interview of the First Generation***

First generation girl said:

"My upbringing was strict. Mainly because my dad didn't indulge in any sort of problems and told me, you daughters are our honour. Mind your own business, and don't follow the native and the things like that, so they wanted to make sure that you would keep your hands clean and don't get into trouble."

On many occasions first generation interviews declared that there was clash between their attitude and traditional values of their parents. In particular, the adolescent girl appeared to be more affected by the parents' views than the boys who instead were granted more freedom. Thus, it was specially the girls who complained about the rigid rules they had been subjected to, which had not been used by their peers' parents. They found themselves torn between a very authoritarian patriarchal family tradition at home and life as it could have been for many of their peers within the socially routine daily life.

### ***Interview of the Second Generation***

Second generation mother said:

"With my daughter it was totally different, she could do what she wanted and she was encouraged because she got me. I had always advised her: keep yourself busy on positive activities without caring the society. Yes every body else is going why can't she go."

This interview reflected that second generation parents' culturally model themselves as parents of their daughters as children, and of the



family (parental ethno-theories) ended up being modified. Harkness *et al.* (2001) suggest that although parental ethno-theories are rooted in shared ideas and practices, they function for parents as flexible systems, always in the process of construction and adaptation in relation to the demand of the moment.

The strong and rigid patriarchal system, to which the second generation of the migrants in the big cities of Pakistan had been subjected to, is changing. However, if young generation is liberating themselves from traditional norms and values, and gradually adopting those of their main stream peers, this is due to the silent revolution, which made the women empowered in Pakistani society. Anderson (1983) explains the ways in which Pakistani origin female students differ from their parents in differentiating religion from culture. Anderson claims that religion provides young Muslims girls with an alternative form of recognition and a shield against the patriarchal authority of their parents.

The empirical analysis was also adopted by the researcher to verify the focus groups studies.

*"The higher the rate of adaptation of the modern values among the women, the greater will be reduction in the patriarchal authority."*

Maximum Likelihood Estimates by Probit model in the Urban Community

Variables	Coefficient	Standard Error	Probability
MINAM (POVTR)	0.62234***	0.00004	0.000552
EDU	0.00006**	0.19076	0.053838
FAMSIZ	0.08569**	0.04847	0.038539
SOCAPT	0.32995**	0.18503	0.037276
WOEMP	0.37238**	0.18654	0.053838

Empirical analysis of this hypothesis reflects that the modern values which have emerged in the shape of the enrolment of the girls in schools, colleges, and universities, women participation in the family's decision and women empowerment tends to become shield against the patriarchal authority of their parents in the big cities of Pakistan. The women's empowerment co-efficient was significant at 5% level of significance in the big cities of Pakistan. The effect of modern value increases one unit; the probability of women empowerment in the urban community in the migrant's families was enhanced by 0.053838. It concludes that migration can promote social and economic autonomy if their husband in

the urban areas accompany with them. This gives them more control over their family's matter or, at least, greater participation in family decision. The result of the second gender migrants' generation in the big cities of Pakistan coincide with Muhammad (2005-06), who stated that majority of the respondents paid more attention to the education of their girls as compared to their sons. They had arranged the tutors for them in order to enable them to get high marks in the respective classes. Because they think that without education their daughters can not achieve good social status in the society.

### **Conclusion**

This study reveals that the first gender migrants' generation are following their traditions and they are upbringing their children especially girls according to customs and traditions. Moreover, the second gender migrants' generation has broken the tradition of the patriarchal authority and is following the modern values, which promoted the social and economic autonomy among women in the big cities of Pakistan. However, majority of the parents have positive attitude toward their children education after migration because education and modern values have eroded the gender discrimination.

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