

Causes of Migration and Poverty of Housemaids in Peshawar and Nowshera: An Exploratory Study of Exploitation

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Abstract

Migration is always linked with poverty, it is considered to be a source of improvement in living standard. For this purpose both internal and external migration is made, but with this migration, besides benefits, comes many problem, and when the migration is made by rural women to urban areas, the odds of happening of these problems increases even more. Because of lack of skills and education, they prefer domestic work. The aim of this study is to analyse the reasons for which the rural women migrate and after they work as housemaids, what complications and problems they face. For this study two areas were targeted and data was collected through questionnaires. Later on the data was analysed descriptively, through percentage analysis method. It was found that working as a housemaid, they face serious problems. To overcome them, some policy recommendations are given which can make migration yield positive results, especially in case of rural women working as housemaids in urban areas.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background and Introduction of the Topic

Migration has always been linked with poverty. People migrate for different reasons, to improve their living standard, in other words to come out of their vicious circle of poverty. Migration for such purpose can be internal as well as external. Migration has been done from different countries to different countries in almost all of the developing countries of the world. Looking at the history of Pakistan, some major events of migration can be seen. The foremost of them is the migration at the time of independence, 1947, when sub-continent was divided into India and Pakistan, and the British rule collapsed. Another is of the migration of Afghans from their country to Pakistan due to the armed conflicts and droughts. Today approximately 1.7 million Afghan refugees are still living in Pakistan. Due to this migration there is a rapid increase in urbanization. Besides migration to Pakistan, an increased number of people are migrating from Pakistan to other countries, and majority of the movement is to Middle East, this started in 1970 and still most of the labour of Pakistan is moving to Middle East in search of jobs.

External migration has always been discussed by scholars but it's the internal migration that receives less attention. Although internal migration has been studied empirically but the social and economic enhancement brought about by this mobility has not been identified, particularly in case of Pakistan. One reason is the unavailability of household data, which is specifically designed for this purpose. When it comes to internal migration, it is women of the household who migrate to urban areas from their villages. These women either migrate with their husbands or they migrate because of the insufficient income earned through agricultural activities.

It is because of the structural, cultural, social and economic obstacles, that rural women, who are one fourth of the world's population, suffer worse than rural men, urban women and urban men in nearly all of the Millennium Development Goals (Inter-Agency Task Force on Rural Women, 2012). It is well known and highly acknowledged that there is gender discrimination when it comes to migration of any sort. Women, generally face many different problems and challenges then men in same areas. Besides, rural women in addition, often lack access to basic productive and infrastructure facilities, and it is because of this that majority of the world's adults are illiterate, and are not part of regular labour force and they struggle for food, health care, and other basic facilities, the experience of rural women is much different than the experience of the urban women. Women of rural areas, regardless of their decision to whether migrate or stay behind when their male partners migrate, are burdened with hardships that the policy makers debate about, and needs to have solutions so that migration for rural women can be worked out. Although these women face many hardships when left behind but when they migrate the conditions become worse. They are left behind because they don't have the resources to migrate to



urban areas as well as they don't have the required information which can help them in their movement. They are illiterate and unskilled as well as they lack social network which is another obstacle. And even if they don't face the above mentioned hurdles, there are families who won't let them avail the opportunities available to them and instead control them, (Bridge, 2005). Culture is another reason, which even in the presence of these resources, will not let these rural women move, and these cultures are more strict in rural areas according to which it is not considered good for women to travel in rural areas, (Bridge, 2005).

Migration for rural women is a way of escape from traditional gender part and roles, gender based discrimination and violence based on gender discrimination. They want to move away from their traditional life styles, and live in place where they can make use of their life in a better way. They think that migration to urban areas will give them better means of earning, the prospects to acquire their rights in urban areas are higher than in rural areas, (UNFPA, 2007). Migration for these rural women is a means for family survival strategy. Because they think that they are not given importance in decision making so if they will start earning and send the remittances to their homes, they will be valued in decision making process of their family.

There are many other factors which are responsible for migration of rural women, beside some mentioned previously. When once decided to migrate, women face many problems regarding migration and it is because of their lack of information, illiteracy and being unaware of the current situation across the country. They become the victims of human trafficking and if they survive it, when they entre urban boundaries they are faced with a hard and difficult life. They cannot adjust to an altogether different life style and when they find work they are faced with abusive contracts and unwanted work situation, (World Bank, 2005).

1.2 Objective of the study

As there has been much research made on external migration, internal migration is going to be the scope of this study, and particularly of those women who migrate to urban areas in search of domestic work. The purpose of this study is to highlight the main reasons of rural to urban migration. To find out that what those factors are that attract them towards this life. Is it out of sheer adventure or because of some problem that they are facing, either financial or social. These rural women because of lack of skill prefer domestic work such as housemaids. This study seeks to investigate the problems faced by such migrated females and working as housemaids in University Town area of Peshawar and Nowshera Cantt. A sample of 50 housemaids was taken and interviewed through the questionnaire designed for this study. Sample size has been kept small because of limitations of time and resources. The dependant variable of the study are the consequences of migration such as not getting the required salary, salary in other forms such as clothes and food, loaded with too much work, long working hours, verbal and physical abuse, not getting any day off and any kind of harassment faced at work place, whereas migration has been taken as independent variable.

1.3 Area of the study

The target area of the study is Nowshera Cantt and University town Peshawar. These two particular areas have been chosen because the housemaids working in houses located in these areas live permanently with their employers where they work so they can be analysed better for the variables and scope of this particular study.

1.4 Limitations of the study

The sample size is kept small because of the limitation of time and resources. As well as that most of the employers were not cooperative, they didn't allow to go inside their houses and conduct interviews, because of the concern for their reputation as well as the housemaids didn't like sharing their personal experiences because of some moral and cultural constraints and fear of losing job.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Migration has not been a new phenomenon, it's happening since last so many centuries but the hike has been found mostly in 18th and 19th century. Different reasons are there that are responsible for migration. It's usually the city side that people migrate to. Reasons such as high income, better job opportunities, and improved living standards are some of the causes that people migrate. When it comes to female migration reasons can be that they dislike agricultural work and find city work fascinating, (Verhoef-Theunus, 1992).

One of the research on contemporary servant migration explained three other main situations that make these female migrate to cities, the foremost is that daughters of such poor families migrate to urban from rural to secure their household income. Therefore move to cities to get employed in domestic services, which they think pay them better wages, (Stark, 1988). Second reason is that they want to diversify their source of income and minimize the risk, members of the same family are sent to different labour markets for the sake of having a diversified and secure earning. Third reason is that they believe that it will help in upward mobility of their families. Through there remittance, the children of the family will get educated as well as these women will also get to know and learn through these long distance migration, (Bras, 2003).



Potential migrants estimate the cost and benefit of migration. It is the high wage that attract most of these migrants but with that these migrants have to bear the cost of higher productivity, the cost of travelling while looking for work, familiarising with the new culture, learning new language cutting old ties, adopting into the new labour market, (Todaro and Marsuzko, 1987). These migrants will measure the cost and benefit of their migration and if the benefit outweighs the costs, they will migrate, (Borjas, 1994). Migration of Mexican women has increased to 28% from 11% over the period of 1965- 1995. International migration of these women is low but when it comes to domestic, here in this sector the female migration outweighs men, because women are more employed in household work needed domestically. When studying the socioeconomic factor, it exerts a significant effect on the male and female migration. Education is another primary factor for female migration, it is positively related, while it is negatively related or almost zero when it comes to male migration, (Donato & Kanaiaupuni, 2000).

Besides the mentioned factors for female migration, the bond to land ownership and business ownership reduces the odds of male migration and increases the odds of female migration but Espinosa & Massey (1997) found that access to social capital is determined to increase the likelihood of female migration then male migration, although the relation is positive in both.

It is thought generally that migration of one of the member of the household will improve economic condition. Because wage or income differential is associated with migration to different sectors. This change is not only for the migrant but it has a significant impact on the other individuals of the family, because of the remittances sent by these migrants to their families, (Memon). When these migrants move to different sectors due to the above mentioned characteristics, they face different problems that at times are very severs, this includes, enslavement, abuse language, exploitation, treated as strangers and being under restrictive contract systems, (Mann, 2011).

It is the female of the family who migrate mainly, not just for economic reasons but they migrate for family and marital reasons, (Memon). Almost 75% of migrant workers constitute of domestic workers and servants. The main reasons for their migration includes, is poverty, gender difference, being lower middle class, having skill that will help them earn better in case of migration, desire of upward social mobility, adventure and independence.

Female being the migrant members of the household, when migrate and work as domestic workers such as housemaids are being exploited in ways that include overburden of work, which can be as much as 11 to 20 hours, day and night, not being paid with salary, no days off, reduced salary, restricted movement, abused physically, being slapped and being talked to in abuse language, (Ahmad, 2011). Most of the migration happens due to family reasons, and the people who migrate due to this reason are mostly children and women, this is another reason of female migration due to which they move from rural to urban areas, (Raza, 2009).

When these women migrate in search of work and find domestic work or work as a servant as a source of earning, this nature of job has adverse social and cultural impact. It affects the upbringing of their children, affecting their marital life, results in poor living conditions, and they can't give their family quality time, (Mann, 2011).

Previous studies shows that, the main target of female migrants going migrating to the urban areas is to make a higher income and have a better household's economic wellbeing. This is true that, off-farm employment help them to have relatively higher earnings as well as have a better living standard. However, although migration is usually and often as a result of achievement of economic goals, the outcome pervade cultural, political, and ideological spheres of rural life, which in turn affect positively the amount of values and lead to improved next generation goals, (Murphy 2002, 21).

The structural changes happening mostly in urban sector help female to modernize and make them more important and active citizen, it makes them independent, (Wilensky, 2002). A survey taken from rural women of Beijing shows that women of rural sector wish to move to urban areas to gain off-farm jobs because it pays them more, being employed in such jobs help taking better care of their children and household work, and through this income they can run a small business back in their home villages, (Luo, 2005).

Women of Pakistan, due to social and cultural restrictions refrain from going out to search for jobs, although this trend has changed over the past decade but still there are areas in Pakistan, whose women face such problems. A survey taken from domestic female workers in Karachi shows that, those women who move to Karachi from adjacent areas like interior Sindh and Baluchistan. These women when travel to Karachi prefer to work as domestic servants because they are unskilled and uneducated and as the domestic work doesn't require any of the two so they get such jobs easily. Working at different people's houses, they complain that are not treated properly, they are faced with verbal and sexual abuse and they are made to work for longer hours and are paid very less in comparison to their work. They get 100 to 200 as a daily wage rate, this is their only income because these women complain that their husbands don't work and are either lazy or drug addicts, (Hussain, 2008).



Chapter 3: Research Methodology

3.1 Population/Sample

This study is conducted by taking a convenient sample of 50 housemaids, and a series of questions were asked. All of the 50 housemaids were visited at their respective places and being interviewed, different questions were asked from them. The questions are of two types basically, one set of questions primarily focus the causes of the migration of these housemaids and the other highlights the consequences of the migration, particularly in the light of their work place situation. They were given different choices as per the requirement of the questionnaire.

3.2 Procedure

To analyse the data and interpret the results, descriptive analysis is made, specifically percentage analysis method is used. The results are based on the percentages obtained from the respondents' answers.

3.3 Variables

Migration of the rural women is the independent variable of the study while the consequences and causes of this migration were taken as dependent variables. The dependent variables includes causes for which they migrate, it can be economic reasons, the unavailability of jobs, higher prospects of job opportunities in urban areas and the job opportunities available to their husbands (in case of married women only). The other dependent variables includes the consequences of migration and getting employed in domestic worker, the problems that they face, which varies from exploitation to harassment to child abuse.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Findings

After collection of data through a questionnaire having 20 questions regarding the objected of this study, the data has been analysed descriptively through percentage analysis method. The following tables show the respondents answers to all the questions. The analysis and the findings are arranged in the order of questions in the questionnaire.

Two areas were targeted for this study i.e. Nowshera Cantt and University Town Peshawar, as mentioned in chapter 3, the sample size of this study is 50 so half of the house maids are from Nowshera Cantt and half from University Town Peshawar.

Area	Nowshera Cantt.	University Town Peshawar
No.	25	25

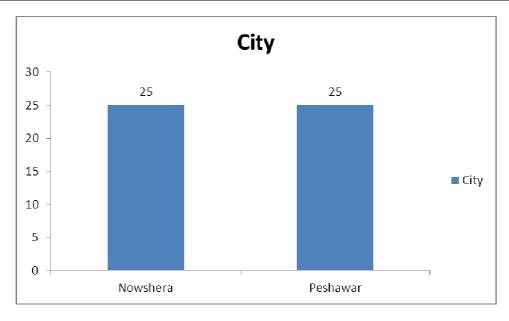


Figure 1
The respondents interviewed were both married and unmarried and were from different age groups as shown in the table.



Age	25 – 35	35 – 45	45 – 55
No.	23	19	8

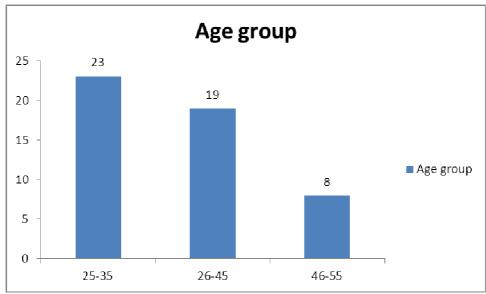


Figure shows that most of the house maids lie in the age group 25 - 35 i.e. 46%, while a lower percentage of 16 are in the age group 45 - 55. The low percentage in this group is because of the age factor, as they age, they can't work actively and that's why are not hired.

The respondents who were interviewed, consists of both married and unmarried females as the table shows.

Options	Married	Unmarried
No.	32	18

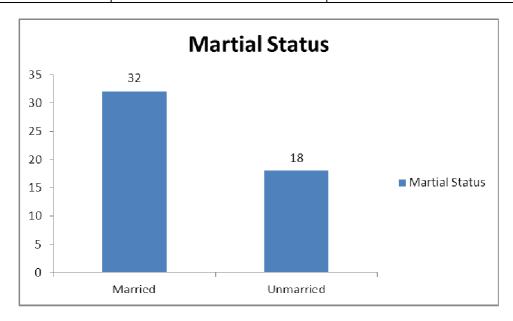


Figure 2
After the percentage analysis of the data, it can be seen that most of the housemaids are married, i.e. 64% of them are married and 36% are unmarried, and the reason for this can be that it's the married women who migrate mostly because they have more reasons for migrating then unmarried/single women.

Out of the total 50 housemaids, 27 of them were working in single family system while 23 were working in joint family system.



Options	Single family	Joint family
No.	27	23

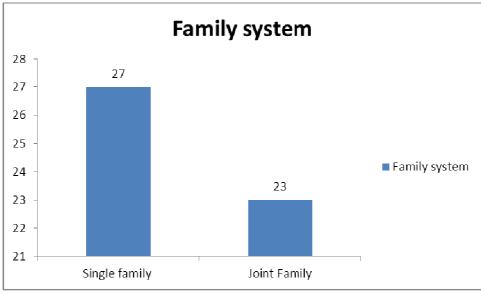


Figure 3
Besides working as housemaids, they were having responsibilities of their own homes. The table shows different responses for the question that whether they loaded with too much of responsibility at home.

Options	Yes	No	Partly
No.	25	5	20

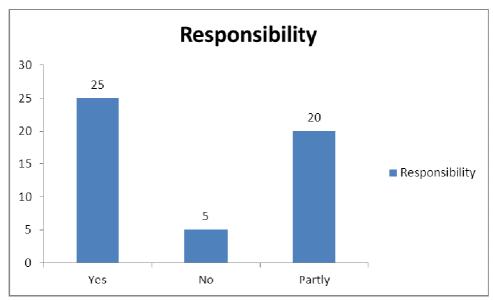


Figure 4

The analysis shows that majority of them i.e. 50% were heavily loaded while 40% were partly loaded and only 10% said that they were not having any responsibility at home and majority of them were unmarried women.

The study from literature review shows various reasons responsible for the migration of rural women, three choices were given to the respondents of this study shown in the table as well as their answers.



Options	Job Opportunities	No local Jobs	Job opportunities for husband
No.	20	17	13

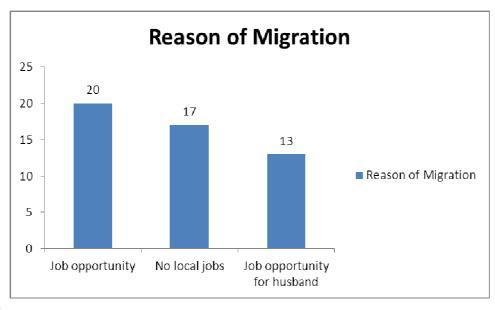


Figure 5

Rural women, when in their villages, mostly are part of agriculture based activities which don't pay them good money, so they want to move to urban areas because they think there they can find more opportunities through which they can earn better, as is clear from the analysis that 40% migrated because of the thought they will find greater opportunities, while 34% of them moved because they couldn't find any opportunities in their villages and 26% of them migrated for the job opportunities available to their husbands in urban sector.

As majority of the respondents were married, the table below shows how many children they were having. This is only for married women so the answers were analysed for 32 married housemaids.

Options	1 - 2	3 – 4	5 – 6
No.	4	18	10

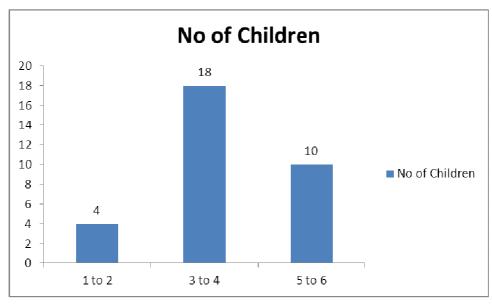


Figure 6

Most of these married women were having a family consisting of 6 or more members. The figure show that 56.25% of the answers were lying in the 3-4 range of children, 31.25% were in 5-6 range while only 12.5% were in 1-2 range. The high percentage shows high rate of population growth and this is because women of rural areas are illiterate and due to lack of information on family policies as well as there is a difference in



thinking level of these women based more on religion and cultural aspects.

They were asked how many of their children are going to school. Again the answers are by 32 married women.

Options	1 – 2	3 – 4	5-6
No.	20	10	2

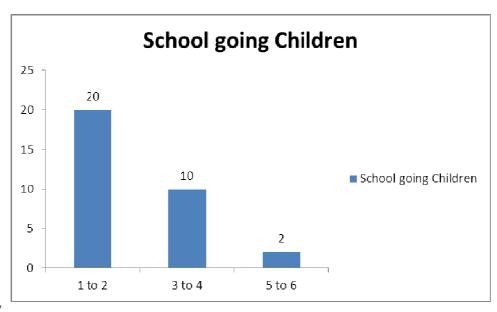


Figure 7

A high percentage of children were not going to schools, i.e. 62.5% of the answers were for option 1-2. And it was because of the poverty, they can't afford to send their kids to school and instead make them work their children in the home chores, as can be seen from the next figure.

Next question was whether their children help in the housework. Table shows the respondents choices.

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Options	Yes	No	Partly
No	11	4	17

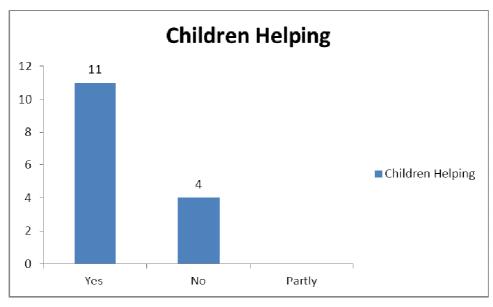


Figure 8

This figure shows the percentage of the children taking part with their mothers in the house work. Most of the answers were for option 'a' and option 'c' i.e. 34.375% and 53.125% and only 12.5% were for option 'b'.

Rural women who migrate to urban areas leave some of their family members in their villages. They were asked whether they have any dependents.



Options	Yes	No
No.	39	11

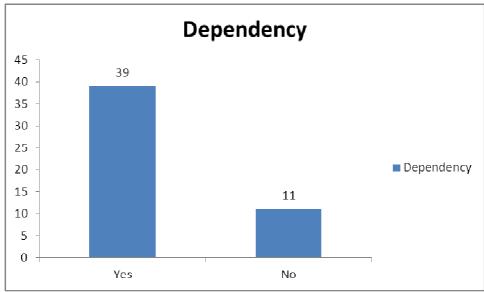


Figure 9The figure shows that 78% of the housemaids were having dependents back in their hometowns, which they were supporting in one way or the other. While 22% was not having anyone dependent on them.

Out of 39 who said yes there were family members dependent on them, they were asked what their relation was to them, giving them three options to choose from.

	, 8 . 8		
Options	Parents/Parents in law	Siblings	Disabled family members
No.	13	15	11

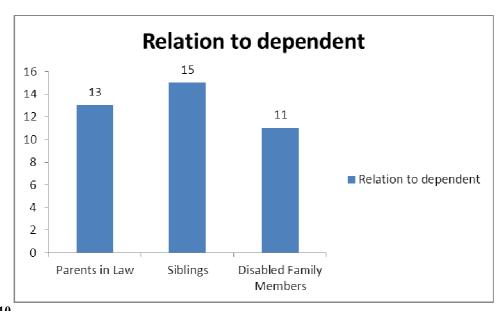


Figure 10

38.50% opted option 'siblings' dependent on them and most of these came from unmarried women, while 33.50% said they have parents/parents in law dependent on them, most of these answers came from married women, and 28.20% said they were having disabled family members, whom they were supporting because they can't work on their own.

This is one of the important objectives of the study as it is seen that these housemaids are not paid monthly salary in cash form so it was asked from them whether they are getting paid.



Options	Yes	No
No.	23	27

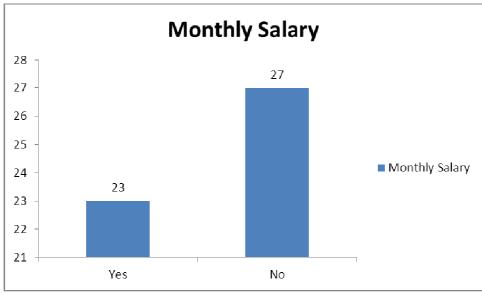


Figure 11
Figure shows that 54% were not getting paid and 46% were paid monthly salary. The maids who were paid were asked how much as can be seen in the next figure.

Out of 23, who said yes they were getting paid, a range of salaries was given to them to choose from.

Options	2000 – 4000	4000 – 6000	6000 - 8000
No	6	14	3

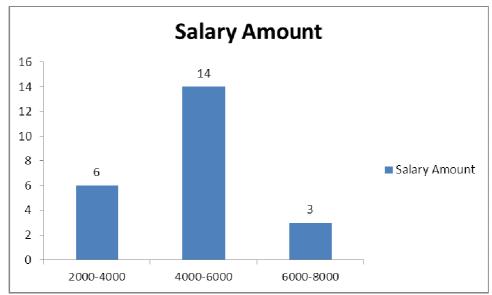


Figure 12

Figure shows that 23 housemaids who said yes they were paid monthly salary, were provided with a range of salaries to choose from. It can be seen that 60.86% of the answers comes from the 4000 - 6000 range. This amount of money is not enough for them to satisfy their needs with, there is a need for this percentage to decrease and they are paid better salary.

Majority of them who said no they were not getting paid, were asked what other compensation was given to them in place of salary.



Options	Food	Clothing	Charity
No.	13	7	7

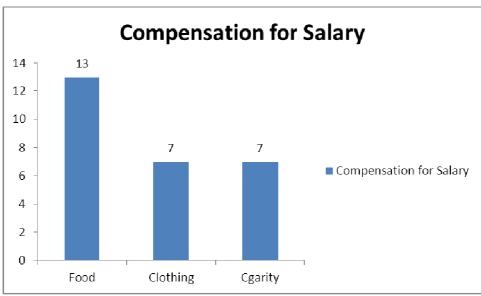


Figure 13

This figure shows the different compensation they getting instead of salary, figure shows that 48.16% were getting food, 25.12%, 25.92% were getting clothing while another 25.92% were getting charity.

They were asked whether residence was a part of their salary.

2	1	2	
Options	Yes	No	Partly
No	2.2	20	8

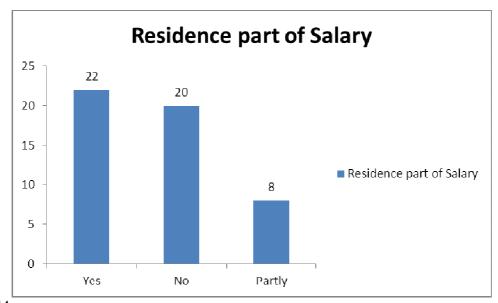


Figure 14

The figure shows that 44% said that residence was part of the salary, 40% said no it was not while 16% said that residence was partly the part of their salary.

Out of 23 housemaids who said they were not getting paid, were asked what other source of income they have to satisfy their other needs, besides food, clothing and shelter.



Options	Partly work at other houses	Husband is employed	BISS
No.	12	3	12

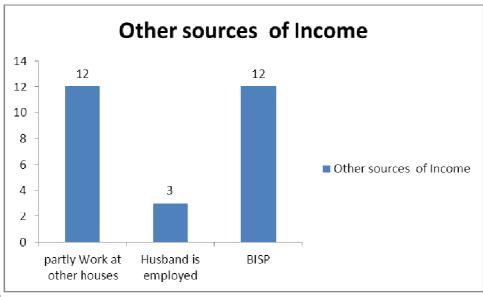


Figure 15

These women who were not getting paid had to find some other source of income, so out of 27 housemaids who said they are not paid monthly salary, 44.44% said they work in other houses partly to earn, 11.11% said that their husbands are employed while another 44.44% said that they were satisfying their needs through Benazir Income Support Program (BISP).

When these rural women opt to work as housemaids, some promises with them by their employers to be provided to them, they were asked whether the facilities promised to them were provided to them.

Options	Yes	No	Partly
No.	14	19	17

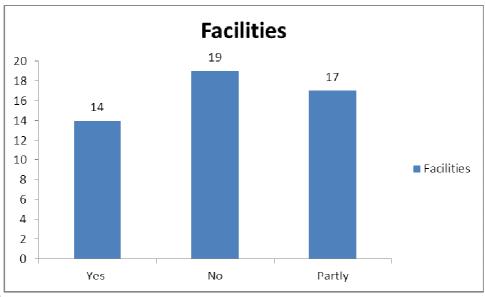


Figure 16

Figure shows that 28% were getting the facilities promised to them, while a majority of them were not i.e. 38% and 34% said that they were getting them partly.

Because of their inexperience and being less familiar with urban life style, they are exploited; next question asked from them was that what kind of exploitation they were facing.



Options	Too much work	No days off	At call all the time
No.	17	20	13

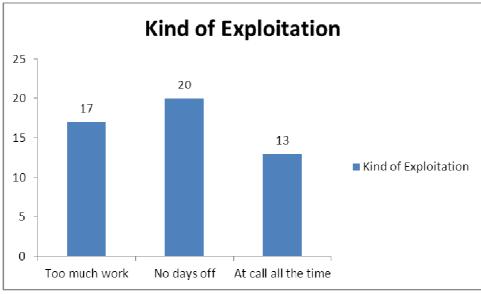


Figure 17
They are being exploited for the reasons mentioned above as is shown in the figure that 34% said that they were loaded with too much work, 40% said that they were not given any day off while 26% said that they were at call all the time, without any proper schedule mentioning their timings of work.

The table below shows the working hours of the housemaids interviewed.

Options	6 – 8	8 – 12	Above 12 hours
No.	10	22	18

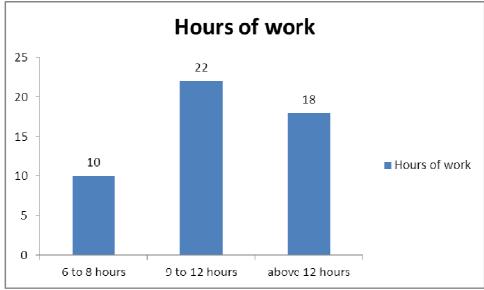


Figure 18 This figure shows the working hours of the housemaids, it can be seen that 44% them work in the range of 8-12 hours which is a lot of time.

Because of their innocence and lack of information they are harassed at their working place. The table below shows the number of harassed and not harassed respectively.



Options	Yes	No
No.	31	19

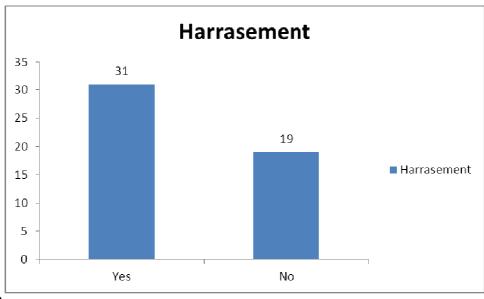


Figure 19

It is usually seen that women are harassed at their work place, even the housemaids, and it is the housemaids who are prone to harassment. Figure show the percentage responses of the female who were harassed is 62% while the others are 38%.

They were asked to specify what kind of harassment or abuse they face.

Options	Verbal abuse	Physical abuse	Other abuse
No.	14	7	10

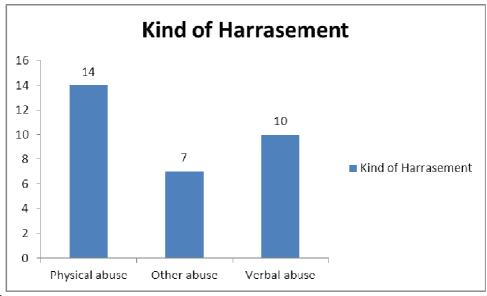


Figure 20

Out of 62% who responded positively to the previous question, told us the type of harassment they face out of the choices given to them to choose from. Figure shows that 45.16% were abused verbally, 22.58% physically and 32.25% chose the option 'other'. Now majority of the unmarried women chose option 'c', although they didn't tell us what was it but it can be concluded that they were being harassed sexually.

Married women having children who either work with them or don't work are also abused in one way or the other. Following table shows the positive and negative responses of the 32 married housemaids.



Options	Yes	No
No.	18	14

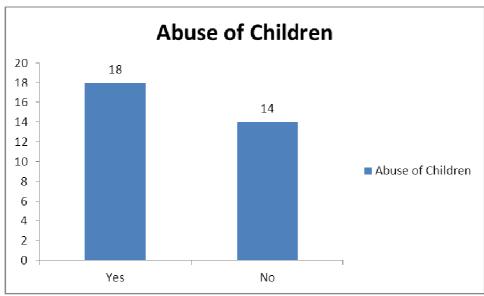


Figure 21
Figure shows that out of 64% housemaids who were married said that their children also suffer with them, 56.25% said that yes they do face abuse of their children while 43.75% gave a negative response.

Chapter 5: Conclusion and Recommendation *5.1 Conclusion*

It is concluded from the analysis and finding of the data that women who migrate are mostly married and they migrate for different reasons, important one of which is the availability of job opportunities, because they want to earn so they can live a better life and support their family members depend on them, because it can been seen form the data that a very low percentage of women mentioned that there other sources of income is working in other housed as part time, this shows that majority of their husband are unemployed or are not working because they are either lazy or are addicted to drugs and other unwanted activities. As they move with their families, most of them have 4 to 5 children to take care of, but due to poverty and illiteracy of their parents rather than going to school they start working with either their mothers' in house work or start working outside and become the victim of child abuse.

When they migrate to urban areas, they don't have any place to live, so when they start working as housemaids, they are given a place for living. Most of these housemaids do not get monthly salary, in return of their services but are rather told that you are being provided with residence and compensation for salary in the form of food, clothing and shelter. The highest percentage of compensation is that of food, and this is usually left over of their employers, the clothes that they get are the one either rejected by their employers or are very old. A very low percentage of housemaids are provided with charity in compensation of salary, but the study shows that they are very few in numbers. When they are not paid, they will need other sources of income because a human have so many other need to take care of besides food, clothing and shelter. So it can be seen that majority of them start working in other houses, as their husbands don't work.

Women are always prone to harassment at their work places, same is the case with housemaids, they are being harassed at their work place, verbally, physically and in other ways that can include sexual harassment. When women start working in other houses partly, the chances of harassment increase as now they work under different natured people. This is one extreme way of exploitation, they are exploitation in other ways such as long working hours, no proper schedule of when will they be working and when they will be giving time to their own families, as well as being at call all the time.

5.2 Recommendation

In light of above discussion, there is a lot of work needed to be done by state for rural women who migrate. The foremost of which is to improve the migration policies and promote safe migration. The cost of internal migration although is low in Pakistan, which makes it easy to migrate, but this easy migration leads to some problems, urbanization is one of them. These migrants should be provided all the facilities and opportunities in



the areas of their origins so that rather then moving to urban areas and becoming a victim of the problems mentioned above, they will work in their home towns and earn as much as they do in urban areas, because one of the major reason of their migration is economic reason. Rights of the rural women should be secured, so that for all the facilities that they migrate, should be available to them, which includes justice in case of gender based violence and provision of assistance to victims of violence and abuse. After they migrate and work as domestic workers, state should bring in their records all the domestic workers and should take care that they are provided with their legal rights and rewards of the services that they provide.

Such institutions which will act as regulatory bodies should be in easy access of these poor housemaids and if they want to fight for their rights, the process should be easy because most of these women are illiterate. Just like in developed countries, not everyone can afford to keep a maid because of their strong legal rights provided to them by the state; it should be implemented in Pakistan as well. An initiative should be taken, the results of which we will see maybe after a decade and it can be a step towards economic development in the form of protected human rights. When they will come under government records, state will be able to know about their families, meaning what are their husbands doing and how many children they have, whether they are getting educated or becoming the victim of child abuse. In this way child abuse will be prevented and when their children will start getting educated, they will help their parents come out of this vicious circle of poverty by becoming a more aware and active citizen of the state.

Access to affordable health services should be promoted including reproductive and sexual health services. These women acting as a household heads should be provided support as well as support services should be provide to the family members who are left behind and are dependent on them. Support to the women empowerment should be provided in rural areas, through the promotion of schemes building on remittances.

When the access to the regulatory institutions will be made easily accessible, all the maids whether married and unmarried can be saved from getting exploited, specially the unmarried young women who are being harassed. Concluding it with this one very important recommendation to the policy makers and researchers that a wide study has been done on external migrants but there is a need of research and study on internal migration. Research should be made and data should be collected on the condition and situation of girls and women of rural areas. Once this is done all the causes of the problems will be known and only then can be it dealt with and taken care of.

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