

# **Feminisation of Migration; Historical Aspects, Contemporary Trends and Socio-economic Empowerment of Women**

MEETHA RAM and BAKHTAWAR NIZAMANI

Migration is a multi-faceted experience with social, economic, and personal development opportunities. Gender-specific migration also has different dynamics. This paper explores the gender-specific trends and impacts of migration on women. It explores the historical context, pushing features, and patterns of the women migration in Pakistan by focusing on how these types of trends have changed over time. The Sindh province of Pakistan has become the main place to migrate due to the country's economic hub, Karachi, so this paper also discusses women's social and economic empowerment as a result of migration by discussing the insights from the Sindh province of Pakistan. Contemporary trends of migration show key challenges like gender discrimination and limited access to resources or educational opportunities, and societal norms also control the economic opportunities for women. Despite these challenges, women establish notable resilience and adaptive behaviour, being part of many economic activities in formal and informal sectors. This paper is based on the structured literature review and uses the PRISMA model for systematic review and analyses of the literature. The application of these tools helped to have comprehensive coverage of the literature on gendered dimensions and social and economic impacts of migration of women for this paper. The analysis highlights the necessity for inclusive policies that encourage gender equality and empowerment of migrated women by ensuring access to education, resources, and legal support mechanisms.

*JEL Classification:* J11, J15, J61, J01, A14, E24.

*Keywords:* Feminisation, Migration, Women Migration, Migration Trends, Women Empowerment

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Pakistan is one of the countries facing the problem of increasing urbanisation; rural-to-urban migration is increasing, and people are migrating mainly to big cities and economic hubs. The labour market in Pakistan is also segmented along gender lines. It is mainly observed that women migrate mainly for family reasons, especially marital reasons. Though in the majority of women, the trend of migration as “tied migration” has been observed more as compared to migrating for economic reasons, this trend does not ensure the woman's participation in the labour market. But at the same time, their existing participation in formal or informal sectors before migration might not be encouraging, while participation after migration mostly increases (Memon, 2017). In Pakistan, women face issues of unequal social and political participation (Ghafoor & Haider, 2018), gender discrimination, social suppression and feudalism-based domestic violence (Khan & Bibi, 2011) in the rural areas. These are among the push factors of migration from rural to urban areas (Khan & Bibi, 2011).

Meetha Ram <[msagarparmar@gmail.com](mailto:msagarparmar@gmail.com)> is a PhD student in Environmental Sustainability and Wellbeing programme at University of Ferrara Italy. Bakhtawar Nizamani <[bakhtawarnizamani1990@gmail.com](mailto:bakhtawarnizamani1990@gmail.com)> is a PhD student in Economics, Management and Quantitative Methods at University of Sassari Italy.

Social division of spaces in Pakistani society is gendered; the public place is for the males, while for the females, there is only a private sphere. Although there is a range between these two polar positions depending upon factors, including social class, age, and geographical location, the division based on gender exists in some or most of the forms. This type of social division leaves a contrasting impact (Khan, 2023), these factors together impact migration decisions, trends, as well as socioeconomic lives of women due to rural to urban migrations. The study by (Ferdoos, 2005) found that female participation in the labour market in Pakistan had increased due to increased employment opportunities. That has increased further, and women have started claiming their rights and migrating out of their homes to other job stations to achieve economic independence and equal social status with men. Today, females are found in a wide range of occupations, not only specific occupations like teachers and doctors. Women's socio-economic status has changed due to their entry into the labour market. However, there are still challenges to women's social status due to their engagement in economic activities, but that varies from rural to urban or family to family.

In Pakistan's case, the process of internal migration is an old phenomenon (Perveen, 1993). Due to internal migration, not only employment opportunities but also the socio-economic conditions of migrant households have improved. The nature and volume of internal migration varied over time (Khan, 1981). The impact of migration on women's empowerment is evident in how it boosts their access to education and economic resources, leading to autonomy and status within their communities. Migrant women play a role by making social contributions, aiding in the exchange of ideas and cultural practices that promote economic and social progress (ODI, 2016). The socio-economic status of migrated women also changes by their increased earnings with formal engagement in the labour market (Ram, et al. 2024). The migration results in better economic opportunities and it is important for women to have financial freedom (Qaisrani, 2020). The gendered aspect of migration poses challenges for women, including mobility, limited healthcare access, and sociocultural barriers that impede their economic participation. Women left behind in areas due to outmigration often shoulder increased agricultural responsibilities but face constraints due to limited resources and training that affect their productivity and empowerment (IRRI, 2024). Therefore, while migration can offer opportunities for women, it necessitates policies tailored to address the vulnerabilities and obstacles encountered by migrant women (UN Women, 2023).

This research paper aimed to broadly explore the complex aspects of women's migration based on two main objectives. Firstly, the paper has explored the historical context, pushing features, and patterns of the women migration in Pakistan by focusing on how these types of trends have changed over time. Secondly, the study has assessed the social and economic empowerment of women as a result of migration by discussing the insights from the Sindh province of Pakistan, further highlighting the impact of migration on women in terms of shifts in their societal roles, changes in social status, their access to educational and employment gains. The paper discusses insights from Sindh province because Sindh province has become the main place to migrate due to the country's economic hub, Karachi (Mahmud, et al. 2010). The province has a predominantly rural population, with agriculture being a major source of livelihood for many communities. However, in recent decades, Sindh has undergone significant economic and social changes, which have influenced migration patterns, including women's migration (Britannica,

2024). The structured literature review has supported the study to ensure a detailed and unbiased analysis of the available and existing literature on the topic. Using the PRISMA model, systematically searching, choosing, and organising related studies, the study focused on identifying the key patterns and themes. The method was useful for evaluating the gendered dimensions, historical trends, and social and economic impacts of migration.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND SCOPE OF STUDY

Migration is a multi-faceted experience that includes social, economic, and personal development opportunities. However, at the same time, it also encompasses the risks of abuse, exploitation, and violence. Acknowledging the social effects of migration in the region of origin is the first step towards adopting the measures and policies needed for identifying and addressing the vulnerabilities, whether as members of migrant households or migrants themselves. There can be different migration scenarios, for example, where the men or women migrate independently, or there can be another scenario where men and women migrate together as a parental couple. In both such scenarios, there are impacts on the dynamics of family and gender roles as well as on the whole community (IOM, 2009).

The societal norms and expectations from the families heavily restrict women's abilities to migrate for work, and many women are afraid of leaving familiar surroundings even if they get better economic opportunities (Khan, 2020). Women's migration, especially the migration of young women in terms of independent migration, is increasing internally as a kind of survival strategy for supporting themselves and their families (UN Women, 2022). Internal migration is mainly in long-distance and rural-to-urban directions. The major reasons for urban migration in Pakistan include lower employment opportunities in rural areas, inadequate income generation sources and less development in rural areas (Mohammad, et al. 2012). The rural-to-urban migration also has a great impact on the social, cultural, and economic dimensions of the migrant's life and destination (Malik, 2015). Another important role of migration to urban units is an increase in higher incomes, investments in human capital, and acquirement of household assets (Basa, et al. 2009).

In the Sindh province of Pakistan, the context of women's migration has broadly changed post-1990s, and there has been an increase in the number of women labour migrants to cities. In rural families, social and financial stresses are common drivers for the women labour migrants to the cities. There are other contributing factors that drive the women migrants, including poor health, education, or other basic facilities, which result in the women's labour migrations to the cities (Nadir, et al. 2024). There is a different context of women labour migration post-migration at the urban units where they face different kinds of issues, including social isolation, poor working conditions, or low wages leading to their low quality of life (Munir & Khalid, 2012). In the rural scenario of Sindh province, societal restrictions and patriarchal norms restrict the job choices of women and their economic participation. In most cases, the rural women in Sindh are engaged in working in agricultural fields (Panhwar, et al. 2021) or working on home-based work like handicrafts (Nizamani, et al. 2019) on daily wages. However, migration has led to easing the lives of women migrants in urban areas. They are comfortable with having basic facilities of daily life and also easing the financial burdens because of having earning opportunities for them (Iqbal, et al. 2018).

Based on the discussion on the overall context of the literature review, some studies measured migration in terms of empowerment, some measured migration as a result of natural disasters, and some studies focused on the issues and challenges faced by migrants at the destination. Some studies focused especially on the health of the migrated population at their destination. Looking at all these studies on different dimensions, there were still gaps in understanding the detailed experiences and effects of women's migration, particularly in Pakistan, and discussing the context of women's migration in Sindh because many existing studies tend to generalise the factors that influence migration without considering the aspects and specific socio-economic contexts. While there are some studies on the trends of migration in Pakistan, there is a lack of analysis focusing on the unique experiences of women and the reasons behind their migration over time. Moreover, migration's social and economic impacts on women in Sindh province, especially regarding their standing in societal roles, educational progressions, and job opportunities, have not been thoroughly explored. This research aimed to address these gaps by investigating the gender experiences of migration, the historical patterns of women's migration in Pakistan, and the socio-economic consequences for women in Sindh province. The study has specifically focused on two objectives: (1) To investigate the historical aspects and patterns of women migration and factors leading towards the women migration in Pakistan, and (2) To evaluate the socio-economic impacts of migration of women in terms of effects on social status, societal roles, educational gains, and employment opportunities in Sindh province of Pakistan.

### 3. METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

A Structured Literature Review has been applied to this research study. The structural literature review (SLR) can be understood as a method that helps to provide a summary of the most impactful, innovative, and recent research studies on any specific topic by using systematic procedures to identify and synthesise studies (Independent Evaluation Group, 2022). The structured literature review uses systematic procedures, so this paper has applied the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) Flow Diagram as an inclusion and exclusion strategy, including the identification, screening, eligibility, and include steps. This study has applied the PRISMA flow diagram because it is crucial in migration research as it helps to standardise the process of selecting and evaluating the studies and improve transparency and reproducibility (Chukwudile, et al. 2024). In addition, there are different studies that have applied similar approaches in similar research fields, like the study by (Tabassum, 2023) focusing on factors of women migration and challenges, a study by (Parvathy & Hemalatha, 2021) on women migration and health care, a study by (Anastasiadou et al., 2024) focusing on gender differences in the process of migration and a study by (Rola-Rubzen, et al. 2023) focusing on gender and rural transformation. Each stage of the PRISMA diagram in this study has been described below:

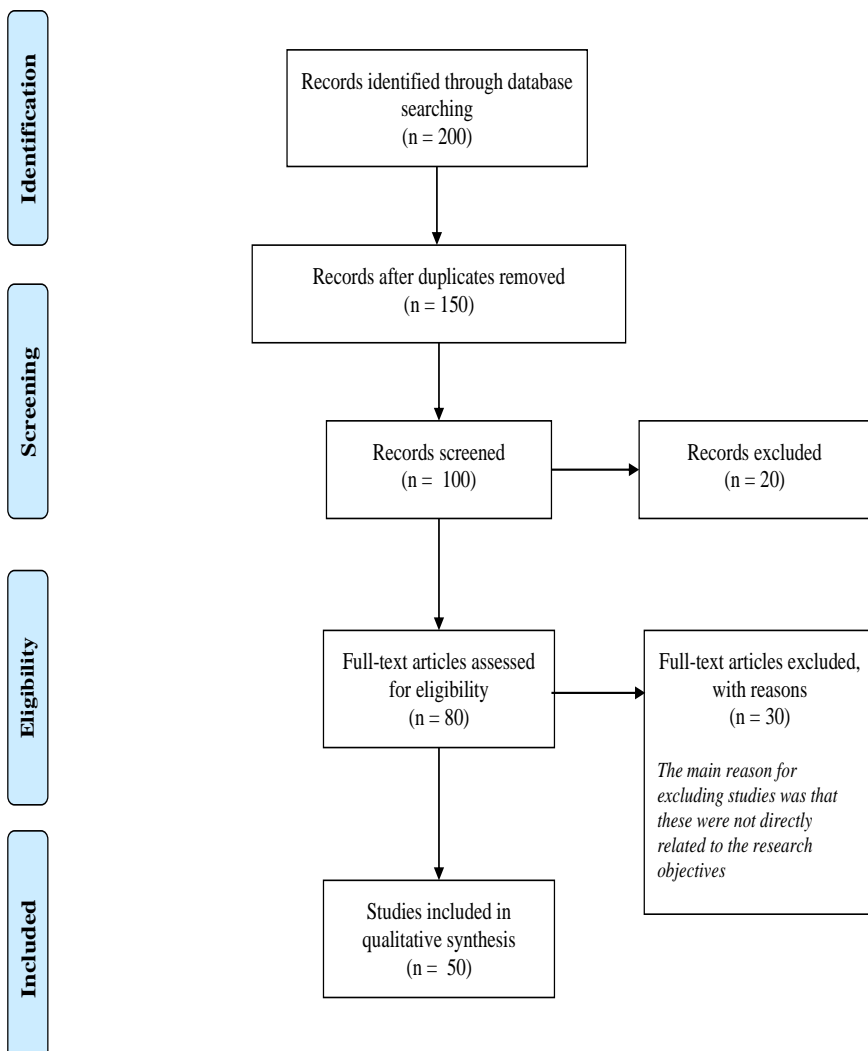
**Identification:** The study has used the Google Scholar database. At the identification stage, 200 records were identified by systematic searchers on Google Scholars using the keywords women migration, migration, women empowerment, feminization of women migration, impacts of labour migration, rural women context, and migration of women in Pakistan.

**Screening:** At the screening stage, after removing the duplicates from the records, a total of 150 unique records were left for screening; among those records, 100 were screened based on the titles and abstracts to assess their relevance to the objectives of the study. At

this stage, the records of a total of 20 were excluded because those were not related to the study's objectives.

**Eligibility:** At the eligibility stage, the remaining 80 records were assessed for eligibility by review of the full text, and 30 records among these were excluded because these studies were not directly linked to the objectives of this study.

**Included:** Finally, 60 studies were taken for the qualitative analysis at this stage. These studies are highly related, and help provide valuable insights towards this study's overall objectives of identifying the gendered dimensions and impact of migration on women's social and economic empowerment. The paper has included studies from recent years, while few are from past years. The most reviewed studies are from 2015 to 2024, while other years are included.



**Fig. 1. Inclusion and Exclusion Strategy**

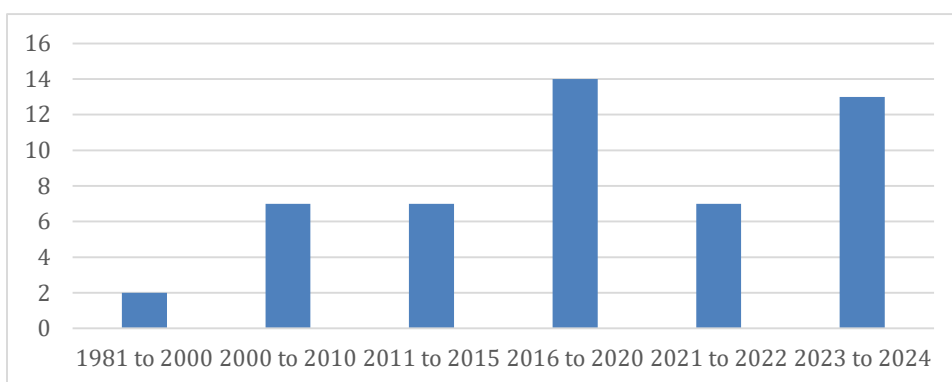
Originally established by (Moher, et al. 2009)

## 4. RESULTS

### 4.1. Results of Descriptive Analysis

This section mentions the descriptive results, including key features from the research study, the distribution by year, journal, geographical area, and key areas focused by research studies. The data was analysed using MS Excel to present results in charts and figures.

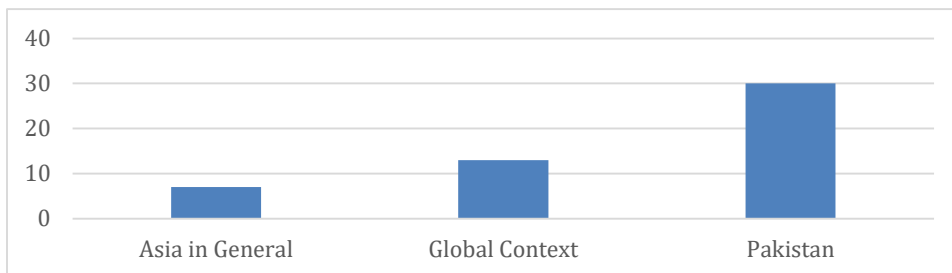
#### 4.1.1. Distribution of Papers by Year



**Fig. 2. Number of Papers by Year**

Figure 2 mentions the distributions of papers by year. We have divided the year into different groups. It can be seen that the graph illustrates the number of papers each year from the year 1981 to the year 2024. This research paper has analysed and discussed the most recent literature from 2015 and onwards; very few papers are from before 2010. In addition, more recent sources from 2023 and 2024 are analysed, which bring recent scientific insights into the fields of study.

#### 4.1.2. Geographical Distribution of the Papers

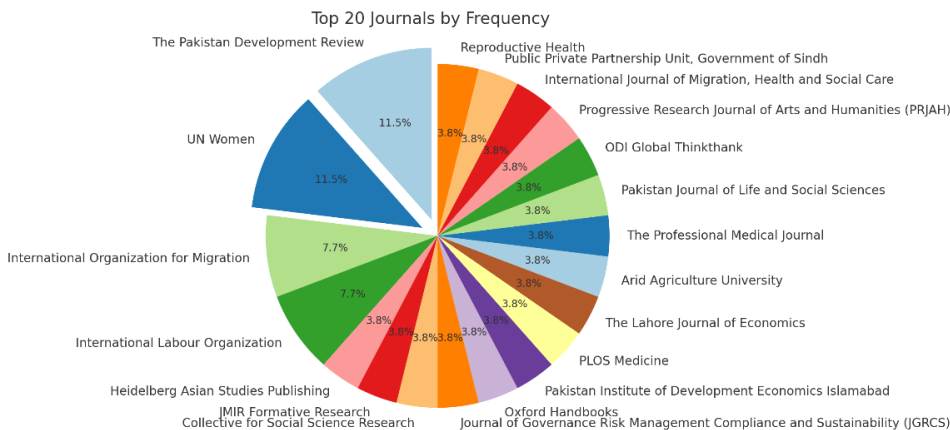


**Fig. 3. Number of Papers by Region/Country**

Figure 3 mentions the geographical distribution of the papers. We have divided the regions into different groups. It can be seen from Figure 3 that most of the papers are from Pakistan, which is the focus area of this study. The papers from Pakistan are also from larger contexts from different provinces, specifically focusing on Sindh province. In

addition, to support the overall discussion, the papers from other regions have also supported the discourse.

**4.1.3. Distribution of Papers by Journal/Publishers**



**Fig. 4. Top 20 Journals/ePublishers by Number of Publications**

Fig. 4 above mentions the top 20 journals/publishers with the most publications in the dataset. It can be seen that the Pakistan Development Review journal and UN Women publications are mostly reviewed and analysed data sources; each accounts for 11.5 percent of the top 20 publications. Following these, the publications of IOM and ILO contribute 7.7 percent each and journals like Collective for Social Science Research, JMIR Formative Research, and Heidelberg Asian Studies Publishing contribute up to 3.8percent. This distribution highlights the diverse range of scholarly sources reviewed and analysed for this research paper. There are other journals and publishers like ODI Global Think-tank, Arid Agricultural University, PRJAH and others, each accounting for 3.8 percent of the publications.

All the reviewed and cited scholarly sources are distributed widely into different areas, highlighting a comprehensive approach to studying migration, social and economic dynamics and women empowerment. The diversity of publications in terms of literature from different years, regions, and a variety of publishing sources highlights the evidence of practical insights in this research paper.

**4.2. Results of Thematic Analysis**

**4.2.1. Historical Aspects and the Trends of Women Migration in Pakistan**

The migration is a process that has a great influence on societies and civilisations for many years. In Pakistan, migration has an important role in shaping the history of a country, like other nations or countries. Historically, the stories of women’s migration in Pakistan have been linked to men and found to have different challenges and strengths supporting their empowerment (Khan, 2020). The women in Pakistan suffer gender-based violence, exploitation, and discrimination, leaving them helpless and marginalised with poor access to resources like healthcare, education, and earning opportunities. Instead of these challenges, women show strength as they struggle to rebuild their way of life. The motives

behind women's migration in Pakistan are multi-layered and complicated, influenced by various political, cultural, and economic factors. These factors have changed over time to shape the patterns of women migration across ages in history (Dadras, et al. 2023).

Below are some common types of historical trends of internal migration of women in Pakistan

*Family Reunion and Marriage:* The migration of women in Pakistan is mainly influenced by family reunions or because of marriage. It is more common for women to move to be with their husbands or to move their families who have already moved to find work, get an education, or other reasons. Moreover, marriage migration plays a role in Pakistan, with many women moving to countries or regions for marital purposes. In the context of marriages, families are actively involved in selecting partners for their daughters, leading to instances where women migrate to join their spouses (Qureshi, et al. 2016).

*Skills and Education:* Getting an education or skills also influences the migration of women to Pakistan. Many women migrate to other places to get an education or learn specific skills in any specific skill set. These opportunities might not be accessible easily in their area, so the migration provides them a way to better career opportunities (Behlol, 2020). In addition, the absence of professional training and opportunities for technical training restrict the access of women to high-paying jobs in rural areas, resulting in migration toward urban areas (Khan, 2020).

*Internal Displacement:* Internal displacement has an important role in the history of women's migration in Pakistan. Conflict, natural disasters, and development projects have forced women to relocate within the country. These displaced women encounter obstacles like access to essential resources, healthcare, education, and legal support. They are also at risk of experiencing violence, discrimination, and exploitation (Kirsten & Bhatt, 2022). The narrative of women's migration in Pakistan is intricate and diverse, influenced by factors such as conflicts, labour migration, social norms, family ties, educational opportunities for labour migration, and internal displacement. Women migrants confront hurdles including bias, violence, exploitation, and inadequate access to essentials like healthcare education aid. Nonetheless, despite challenges faced by women migrants in Pakistan, they demonstrate resilience and empowerment by forming networks advocating for their rights and pursuing livelihoods. It is crucial to implement policies and laws that are sensitive towards gender issues and cater to the difficulties encountered by female migrants to promote gender equality empowerment (UN Women, 2022).

*Social and Cultural Factors:* In Pakistan, the migration of women is influenced by cultural factors. The traditional beliefs and customs that favour men and limitations on women's freedom and movement can compel women to seek opportunities for life elsewhere. Sometimes, societal or cultural obligations may also drive women to migrate, like meeting the expectations of their families or communities (Naveed, et al. 2012). However, migration can also challenge traditional gender roles and empower women by providing them new opportunities, skills, and experiences. Women often move to be with their extended families after marriage to meet cultural norms or look after elderly relatives. Moreover, cultural traditions and societal pressures can influence women to relocate for reasons like customs, forming ties, or seeking refuge from harmful practices like honour killings or abuse in the home (Hakim & Aziz, 1998).



#### ***4.2.2. Impacts of Migration to Uplift the Social and Economic Status of Women Pakistan; Insights from Sindh Province***

Sindh, the populous and third largest province in Pakistan, shares borders with Punjab to the north, Baluchistan to the west, Indian states to the east, and the Arabian Sea to the south. Its capital city, Karachi, not only holds the title of being the city in both the province and country but also serves as a key financial centre (PPPU Sindh, 2024). The economic situation of women following migration in the Sindh province of Pakistan is impacted by factors like cultural norms, job opportunities, and government policies. Migration has seen a rise in Sindh, with many women being part of the internal displacement (Wassan, et al. 2017). The Sindh province, situated in the part of Pakistan, is renowned for its cultural background, agricultural economy, and bustling cities like Karachi, Hyderabad, and Sukkur. With a population encompassing both urban dwellers, the province experiences frequent migration patterns within its boundaries and beyond. Internal migration signifies the relocation of individuals within the nation, whereas international migration involves people crossing borders (Memon, 2021). In Sindh province, people move within the region for various reasons, like job prospects, social ties, and environmental factors. They seek improved opportunities and social connections like marriage and education. May be forced to relocate due to natural disasters. In Sindh, women often move for marriage traditions while men from rural areas migrate to cities in search of work, leaving their families behind (Lodhi, et al. 2016).

Women's economic prospects in the Sindh province post-migration are influenced by various elements such as their background, skill set, social connections, and resource availability. Their economic prospects can be classified into two sectors: salaried positions in established companies and government bodies and the informal sector encompassing self-employment in small businesses, home-based endeavours, and temporary labour opportunities (UN Women, 2020). In Sindh province, women's participation in the job sector is still limited despite some progress. Various obstacles like gender bias, lack of education and skills, societal norms, and mobility constraints hinder women from entering employment. After migration to urban areas, many women find opportunities in the sector through self-employment in small businesses like food stalls, tailoring and handicrafts, and home-based work such as embroidery and sewing clothes (UN Women, 2023). In the job sector, women benefit from working hours that help them manage their household duties alongside earning a living. Nevertheless, informal employment poses challenges such as job instability, inadequate social safeguards, and limited access to services, leaving women at risk of exploitation, low pay, and unfavourable work environments (Amber & Chichaibelu, 2023). In the areas of Sindh province, agriculture stands out as a player in the economy, with women holding dynamic roles in different stages of agricultural work, such as production, processing, and marketing. Yet obstacles like gender norms, biased inheritance regulations, and insufficient knowledge about land ownership rights hinder women's access to land and other essential resources (Afzal, et al. 2020). Women also face challenges in accessing credit, markets, and extension services, which limit their ability to improve their agricultural productivity and income. Women encounter a range of challenges when entering the job market following migration.

These obstacles extend beyond those listed below, encompassing issues women face in their post-migration locations.

*Gender Discrimination:* Gender discrimination is rooted in society in many ways. Women encounter biased treatment in job recruitment, advancement, and salary structures within employment settings. Additionally, in formal sectors, women are vulnerable to harassment, exploitation, and unequal compensation for their labour. The situation remains mainly the same after migrating to the urban units in the province. The cultural norms may impede women's freedom of movement, thereby constraining their ability to engage fully in endeavours by restricting their reach to markets, knowledge, and essential resources (Memon, et al. 2023).

*Limited Education and Skills:* Women's economic empowerment post-migration heavily relies on education and skills. However, numerous women in Sindh province face barriers to accessing education and vocational training, which restricts their opportunities for sector employment or participation in paying economic endeavours. The influence of gender norms and early marriages further complicates women's pursuits as societal expectations often prioritise household duties over pursuing educational goals (Malik, et al. 2022).

*Lack of Access to Resources:* In Sindh province, women often have restricted access to resources like land, credit, and technology. Discriminatory inheritance practices limit their access to land and property because of male dominance. Factors like norms, affordability, and cultural taboos can also limit women's access to technology, such as phones and the internet (Antwi & Koranteng, 2017).

It is commonly thought that migration offers women chances to enhance their economic status. This includes, firstly, job prospects in both informal sectors. In these sectors, women may find employment opportunities in fields like manufacturing, hospitality, healthcare, and services that might not be easily accessible in their communities. Formal employment can bring wages, improved working conditions, and benefits (Bhatt, 2009). Additionally, the chances for women to become entrepreneurs and work for themselves play a role in empowering them. Moving to urban units can also empower women to establish their businesses and pursue self-employment opportunities. Female migrants often take part in occupations like selling on the streets, doing household chores, and engaging in small-scale trading. These entrepreneurial pursuits offer women flexibility, independence, and a sense of control over their endeavours leading to earnings and economic empowerment (International Labour Organization, 2018). Education and skill development play a role in empowering women economically. By providing access to education and skill-building opportunities, women can improve their chances of finding employment and enhancing their prospects. Women who migrate may gain skills and knowledge through educational programs, vocational training, or learning on the job. These acquired skills can open up job prospects, higher incomes, and improved economic conditions (Menjívar, et al. 2019). Women also have access to social networks and social capital after migrating to urban units, which can contribute to economic opportunities. Women can benefit from media platforms by receiving information, connections, and assistance, like job recommendations, professional contacts, and insights on market trends (IOM, 2015). Finally, migration also contributes to their empowered social mobility, leading further towards gender empowerment. Migration could potentially disrupt gender expectations and customs, granting women independence and control over their financial endeavours. Female migrants might also encounter challenges as they transition from

lower-income environments to higher-income ones, resulting in better economic prospects and societal standing (Skeldon, 2006).

A mix of norms, job options, and government regulations shapes the economic opportunities for women in Sindh after migration. Despite facing challenges like gender bias, limited education and skills, and restricted access to resources, women in Sindh show resilience and adaptability in their pursuits. Many women work in the sector through self-employment in businesses, home-based jobs, and temporary labour roles. However, these informal jobs often have difficulties, such as job insecurity and insufficient social protection. Education and skill enhancement are essential for empowering women; however, many encounter barriers to accessing these opportunities due to norms and early marriages. Migration provides women with job prospects in both informal sectors, improving their economic status and empowering them through entrepreneurship and self-employment. Access to networks and social connections further enhances women's opportunities by offering crucial information, connections, and support. In general, migration has the potential to challenge gender roles by giving women independence and control over their financial pursuits, thereby contributing to their economic empowerment and gender equality.

## **5. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS**

This paper suggests a few policy gaps based on this study's structured review and limitations. Based on the review results, a few policy recommendations are below.

1. The gender norms that restrict women's rights must be addressed by promoting gender equality in various ways at the community level to empower rural women to make their migration decisions.
2. The legal support system for migrated women must be enhanced with the legal framework and social services that address their challenges after migration and provide them with education and skills to reduce their dependency on male family members.
3. The infrastructure must be developed to support the mobility and safety of women during the migration process and post-migration at their destination.
4. Initiatives must be taken to support women's entrepreneurship and women-owned small businesses.
5. Women-specific employment opportunities should be enhanced to support women's economic empowerment after migration.
6. The issues related to women's inheritance properties must be addressed through special initiatives for having their legal property rights.
7. Policy measures must be taken to support social networking and the initial adjustment of rural women to new communities at their destination.
8. Rural women must be provided with similar facilities as urban women to promote the equal status of rural and urban women and to cope with the rising challenges of urbanisation.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

The feminisation of the migration has become gradually noticeable, motivated by the economic necessities, gender-based job demands, and growing societal values. In Pakistan, the current trends of female migration continue to reflect gender biases, with women migrating for family reunification, marriage, education, and employment. Despite facing

potential challenges like gender discrimination, their limited access to education and vocational training, and limited or controlled access to essential resources, women in Pakistan establish notable resilience and adaptability. They are involved in different economic activities within formal and informal sectors, motivated to reconstruct their way of life and support their families. Access to information, education, and skills has changed the trends and dynamics of women's migration from rural to urban areas and family reunification; now, women migrate for education and career achievements.

Specifically, in the insights of Sindh province, the second largest populous province of Pakistan, women's economic projections are a mixture of their existing background impacts post-migration, their available skill set, social connections, and availability of resources. In Sindh, women contribute to the informal sector through their self-employment approach in small businesses and home-based work, such as handicrafts. However, these kinds of informal jobs mainly come with issues like instability of jobs and limited types of social protection. It is found that education and skill development are important to enhance women's economic empowerment in the Sindh province, but challenges like robust societal norms still exist.

The migration gives women better job opportunities in formal and informal sectors, supporting them in improving their economic standing and helping to empower them through entrepreneurship and self-employment approaches. Access to social networks and social capital also helps women's economic opportunities by providing vital information, strong connections, and professional and social support. Overall, migration has the potential to disrupt traditional gender roles, giving women greater independence and control over their financial activities and contributing towards their overall economic and social empowerment. Achieving gender equality and women empowerment in the migration contexts in Pakistan needs inclusive policies that address unique issues women migrants face, safeguarding their access to education, resources, and legal support mechanisms and promoting social and economic opportunities. These approaches will form an impartial environment where women can grow and participate in societal development.

## APPENDIX

S.No.	Authors	Title of Paper/Report	Year	Areas focused	Region/Country Focused	Journal/Publisher
1	Afzal, A., Jayasuriya, S., & Meehan, S.	Gender Issues and Horticulture Markets in Pakistan	2020	Gender Issues, Horticulture Markets	Pakistan	Arid Agriculture University
2	Amber, H., & Chichaibelu, B. B.	Patterns and Causes of Female Labor Force Participation: An Ageâ€¢Periodâ€¢Cohort Analysis for Pakistan	2023	Female Labor Force Participation	Pakistan	Population Research and Policy Review
3	Anastasiadou, A., Kim, J., Sanlitürk, E., G. de Valk, H., & Zagheni, E.	Gender Differences in the Migration Process: A Narrative Literature Review	2024	Gender Migration	Global	Population and Development Review
4	Antwi, S., & Koranteng, O. E.	International Remittances and Economic Growth in Ghana: Does the Measure Of Financial Development Matter?	2017	Economic Growth	Ghana	International Journal of Technology and Management Research
5	Basa, C., Villamil, L., & Guzman, V.	Migration, local development and governance in small towns: two examples from the Philippines	2009	Migration, Local Development, Governance	Philippines	IIED Publications
6	Behlol, M. G.	Educational Migration as a Brain Drain: Curse or Boon for Pakistani	2020	Educational Migration, Brain Drain	Pakistan	Journal of Research in Social Sciences (JRSS)
7	Bhatt, W.	The Gender Dimension of Migration in India: The Politics of Contemporary Space in Orissa and Rajasthan	2009	Gender Migration	India	Development in Practice
8	Dadras, O., Nakayama, T., & Kihara, M.	Internal migration and utilization of reproductive and maternity care among women in Pakistan: evidence from a recent National Survey	2023	Internal Migration, Reproductive and Maternity Care	Pakistan	Frontiers in Public Health
9	Ferdoos, A.	Social Status of Rural and Urban Working Women in Pakistan: A Comparative Study	2005	Social Status, Working Women	Pakistan	Google Books
10	Ghafoor, M., & Haider, K.	Political Challenges of Women Empowerment in Pakistan	2018	Women Empowerment, Political Challenges	Pakistan	IOSR Journal of Business and Management
11	Hakim, A., & Aziz, A.	Socio-cultural, Religious, and Political Aspects of the Status of Women in Pakistan	1998	Status of Women, Socio-cultural, Religious, Political Aspects	Pakistan	The Pakistan Development Review
12	International Labour Organization	World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends for Women 2018 â€¢ Global snapshot	2018	Employment, Social Outlook	Global	International Labour Organization
13	IOM	World Migration Report 2015 - Migrants and Cities: New Partnerships to Manage Mobility	2015	Migration, Urbanization	Global	IOM Publications Platform

14	IOM	Gender and Labour Migration in Asia	2009	Gender, Labour Migration	Asia	IOM Publications Platform
15	Iqbal, T., Siddiqui, N., & Madani, M.	Trends, Patterns and Impact of Migration in Karachi	2018	Migration Patterns, Migration Impact	Pakistan	The Journal of History and Social Sciences,
16	IRRI	Impact of rural outmigration on women and women empowerment through entrepreneurship	2024	Rural Outmigration, Women Empowerment, Entrepreneurship	India	Krushi Odisha: International Rice Research Institute
17	Khan, A. R., & Bibi, Z.	Women's Socio-Economic Empowerment through Participatory Approach: A Critical Assessment	2011	Women Empowerment, Participatory Approach	Pakistan	Pakistan Economic and Social Review
18	Khan, M.	The dynamics influencing women to become teachers in the public sector of Pakistan	2023	Women Teachers, Public Sector Employment	Pakistan	Handbook on Gender and Public Sector Employment, Edward Elgar Publishing
19	Khan, M. H.	Underdevelopment, Poverty and Inequality in Pakistan	1981	Underdevelopment, Poverty, Inequality	Pakistan	Vanguard Publications Ltd.
20	Khan, T.	Female labour migration from Pakistan: a situation analysis	2020	Female Labour Migration	Pakistan	ILO: International Labour Organization. Labour Migration Branch
21	Kirshnan, V. B.	Marriage is the biggest reason for migration in India	2020	Migration, Marriage	India	The Hindu
22	Kirsten, O., & Bhatt, O.	Internally Displaced Persons	2022	Internally Displaced Persons	Pakistan	Global Human Rights Defense
23	Lodhi, S., Aziz, B., & Iqbal, B.	Role of Remittances in Determining Household Consumption Patterns and Welfare: A Case Study of Pakistan	2016	Remittances, Household Consumption, Welfare	Pakistan	International Journal of Humanities, Arts, Medicine and Sciences (BEST: IJHAMS)
24	Mahmud, M., Musaddiq, T., Said, F., & Sabir, M.	Internal Migration Patterns in Pakistan—The Case for Fiscal Decentralisation	2010	Migration Patterns	Pakistan	The Pakistan Development Review
25	Malik, A. S.	Rural Urban Migration: Socio-Cultural Changes in Pakistan - Preventive Measures taken by Government and Civil Society to Control it	2015	Rural-Urban Migration, Socio-Cultural Changes	Pakistan	The Professional Medical Journal
26	Malik, F., Manzoor, H., Manzoor, H., Kumar, H., Channa, S., & Raza, T.	Critical Analysis Of Educational Policies Of Pakistan	2022	Educational Policies	Pakistan	Journal of Positive School Psychology
27	Memon, A. Z., Mian, A., Reale, S., Spencer, R., Bhutta, Z., & Soltani, H.	Community and Health Care Provider Perspectives on Barriers to and Enablers of Family Planning Use in Rural Sindh, Pakistan: Qualitative Exploratory Study	2023	Family Planning	Pakistan	JMIR Formative Research
28	Memon, R.	Pakistan; Internal Migration and Poverty Reduction	2017	Internal Migration, Poverty Reduction	Pakistan	Collective for Social Science Research

29	Memon, R. A.	A Comparative Study on Women Perception and Condition In the Event of Natural Disaster and Migration: A Qualitative Study from Sindh “Pakistan Flood 2010	2021	Natural Disaster, Migration	Pakistan	Journal of Governance Risk Management Compliance and Sustainability (JGRCS)
30	Menjvar, C., Ruiz, M., & Ness, I.	The Oxford Handbook of Migration Crises	2019	Migration Crises	Global	Oxford Handbooks
31	Mohammad, I., Lionel, D., Mohammad, G., Farooqui, A., Ahmad, F., Javed, T., . . . Khan, G.	Migration Patterns in Pakistan: Preliminary Results from the PLM Survey, 1979	2012	Migration Patterns	Pakistan	Pakistan Institute of Development Economics Islamabad
32	Munir, K., & Khalid, S	Pakistan’s Power Crisis: How Did We Get Here?	2012	Economic Migration	Pakistan	The Lahore Journal of Economics
33	Nadir, R., Batool, F., Javaid, H., Ghazanfar, M., Bashir, S., & Naeem, H.	Pauperization and migration: the continuing violence of Green Revolution in rural Punjab, Pakistan. 13th Annual Conference of the AK South Asia	2024	Migration, Economic Empowerment	Pakistan	Heidelberg: Heidelberg Asian Studies Publishing
34	Naveed, F., Muhammad, I. Z., & Nawaz, N.	Socio-economic and cultural factors affecting migration behavior in district Faisalabad, Pakistan	2012	Migration Behavior	Pakistan	Pakistan Journal of Life and Social Sciences
35	Nizamani, B., Ram, M., & Nizamani, D. L.	Sindh Handicrafts and Socio-Economic Status of Women; A case study from District Tando Allahyar Sindh Pakistan	2019	Rural Women	Pakistan	Global Scientific Journals
36	ODI	Women on the move: migration, gender equality and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development	2016	Migration, Gender Equality	Global	ODI Global Thinktank
37	Panhwar, G., Tahir, B., & Tunio, S.	Female Socio-economic Conditions and Feminization of Poverty in Rural Areas of District Larkana of Sindh, Pakistan	2021	Rural Women	Pakistan	Progressive Research Journal of Arts and Humanities (PRJAH)
38	Perveen, A.	Inter-Provincial Migration in Pakistan 1971-1981	1993	Inter-Provincial Migration	Pakistan	The Pakistan Development Review
39	Qaisrani A.A	Reaching out, inviting in: Pakistan’s approach to diaspora engagement	2020	Out migration	Pakistan	Migration and Developmen
40	Qureshi, N. R., Sheikh, S., Khowaja, R. A., Hoodbhoy, Z., Zaidi, S., Sawchuck, D., . . . Dadeszlen, P.	Health care seeking behaviours in pregnancy in rural Sindh, Pakistan: a qualitative study	2016	Health Care Seeking Behaviours, Pregnancy	Pakistan	Reproductive Health
41	Ram, M., Nizamani, B., & Muhammad, A.	Context of Rural to Urban Migration and Socio-Economic Empowerment of Women in Pakistan and Philippines; a Systematic Literature Review	2024	Rural to urban migration context	Pakistan	Asas Wa Tandhim: Jurnal Hukum, Pendidikan & Sosial Keagamaan
42	Skeldon, R.	Recent Trends in Migration in East and Southeast Asia	2006	Migration Trends	East and Southeast Asia	Asian and Pacific Journal
43	UN Women	UN Women: The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women	2024	Gender Equality, Women Empowerment	Global	United Nations

---

44	UN Women	Migrant women & remittances: exploring the data	2020	Migrant Women, Remittances	Global	UN Women
45	UN Women	Factsheet: Gender aspects of migration in Asia	2022	Gender, Migration	Asia and the Pacific	UN Women
46	UN Women	How migration is a gender equality issue	2023	Migration, Gender Equality	Global	UN Women
47	UNFPA, T.	A Passage to Hope: Women and International Migration	2006	International Migration	Global	State of World Population 2006
48	United Nations	UN Millennium Development Goals	2000	Millennium Development Goals	Global	United Nations
49	United Nations	Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	2015	Sustainable Development Goals	Global	United Nations
50	Wassan, M., Hussain, Z., Shah, M. A., & Amin, S.	International migration and labor change in rural Sindh, Pakistan	2017	International Labor Migration, Social Change	Pakistan	Asian and Pacific Migration Journal

---



## REFERENCES

- Afzal, A., Jayasuriya, S., & Meehan, S. (2020). Gender issues and horticulture markets in Pakistan. Rawalpindi: Arid Agriculture University.
- Amber, H., & Chichaibelu, B. B. (2023). Patterns and causes of female labour force participation: An age–period–cohort analysis for Pakistan. *Population Research and Policy Review*.
- Anastasiadou, A., Kim, J., Sanlitürk, E., G. de Valk, H., & Zagheni, E. (2024). Gender differences in the migration process: A narrative literature review. *Population and Development Review*.
- Antwi, S., & Koranteng, O. E. (2017). International remittances and economic growth in Ghana: Does the measure of financial development matter? *International Journal of Technology and Management Research*, 46–59.
- Basa, C., Villamil, L., & Guzman, V. (2009). Migration, local development and governance in small towns: Two examples from the Philippines. Retrieved from IIED Publications: <https://www.iied.org/10576iied>
- Behlol, M. G. (2020). Educational migration as a brain drain: Curse or boon for Pakistani. *Journal of Research in Social Sciences (JRSS)*, 2305–6533.
- Bhatt, W. (2009). The gender dimension of migration in India: the politics of contemporary space in Orissa and Rajasthan. *Development in Practice*, 87–93.
- Britannica (2024). Sindh. Retrieved from Britannica: <https://www.britannica.com/place/Sindh-province-Pakistan>
- Chukwudile, B., Pan, D., Silva, L., Gogoi, M., Al-Oraibi, A., Bird, P. & Nellums, L. (2024). Antimicrobial resistance among migrants in Europe: A systematic review and meta-analysis—update from 2017 to 2023. *EClinicalMedicine*, 75.
- Dadras, O., Nakayama, T., & Kihara, M. (2023). Internal migration and utilisation of reproductive and maternity care among women in Pakistan: Evidence from a recent National Survey. *Frontiers in Public Health*, 3389.
- Ferdoos, A. (2005). Social status of rural and urban working women in Pakistan: A comparative study. Google Books.
- Ghafoor, M., & Haider, K. (2018). Political challenges of women empowerment in Pakistan. *IOSR Journal of Business and Management*, 66–79.
- Hakim, A., & Aziz, A. (1998). Socio-cultural, religious, and political aspects of the status of women in Pakistan. *The Pakistan Development Review*, 727–746.
- Independent Evaluation Group, I. (2022). Structured Literature Reviews. World Bank Group.
- International Labour Organisation. (2018). World employment and social outlook: Trends for women 2018 — global snapshot. Geneva, Switzerland: International Labour Organisation.

- IOM (2009). *Gender and labour migration in Asia*. Geneva, Switzerland: International Organisation for Migration.
- IOM (2015). *World Migration Report 2015—Migrants and cities: New partnerships to manage mobility*. Geneva, Switzerland: International Organisation for Migration.
- Iqbal, T., Siddiqui, N., & Madani, M. (2018). Trends, patterns and impact of migration in karachi. *The Journal of History and Social Sciences*, 65–87.
- IRRI, I. (2024). *Impact of rural outmigration on women and women empowerment through entrepreneurship*. Krushi Odisha: International Rice Research Institute.
- Khan, A. R., & Bibi, Z. (2011). Women's socio-economic empowerment through participatory approach: A critical assessment. *Pakistan Economic and Social Review*, 133–148.
- Khan, M. (2023). The dynamics influencing women to become teachers in the public sector of Pakistan. H. Conley, & P. Koskinen Sandberg (Eds.), *Handbook on gender and public sector employment*. Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Khan, M. H. (1981). *S.M Naseem; Underdevelopment, poverty and inequality in Pakistan*. Lahore, Pakistan: Vanguard Publications Ltd.
- Khan, T. (2020). *Female labour migration from Pakistan: A situation analysis*. Geneva: ILO: International Labour Organisation. Labour Migration Branch.
- Kirsten, O., & Bhatt, O. (2022). *Internally displaced persons*. Pakistan: Global Human Rights Defense.
- Lodhi, S., Aziz, B., & Iqbal, B. (2016). Role of remittances in determining household consumption patterns and welfare: A case study of Pakistan. *International Journal of Humanities, Arts, Medicine and Sciences (BEST: IJHAMS)*, 1–14.
- Mahmud, M., Musaddiq, T., Said, F., & Sabir, M. (2010). Internal migration patterns in pakistan—the case for fiscal decentralisation. *The Pakistan Development Review*, 49(4), 593–607. <https://doi.org/https://www.jstor.org/stable/41428678>
- Malik, A. S. (2015). Rural urban migration; socio-cultural changes in Pakistan— Preventive measures taken by government and civil society to control it. *The Professional Medical Journal*, 674–682.
- Malik, F., Manzoor, H., Manzoor, H., Kumar, H., Channa, S., & Raza, T. (2022). Critical analysis of educational policies of Pakistan. *Journal of Positive School Psychology*, 1762–1778.
- Memon, A. Z., Mian, A., Reale, S., Spencer, R., Bhutta, Z., & Soltani, H. (2023). Community and health care provider perspectives on barriers to and enablers of family planning use in rural Sindh, Pakistan: Qualitative exploratory study. *JMIR Formative Research*.
- Memon, R. (2017). *Pakistan; internal migration and poverty reduction*. Karachi, Pakistan: Collective for Social Science Research.

- Memon, R. A. (2021). A comparative study on women perception and condition in the event of natural disaster and migration: A qualitative study from Sindh—Pakistan flood 2010. *Journal of Governance Risk Management Compliance and Sustainability (JGRCS)*, 50–61.
- Menjívar, C., Ruiz, M., & Ness, I. (2019). *The oxford handbook of migration crises*. Oxford Handbooks.
- Mohammad, I., Lionel, D., Mohammad, G., Farooqui, A., Ahmad, F., Javed, T. & Khan, G. (2012). Migration patterns in Pakistan: Preliminary results from the PLM survey, 1979. Pakistan Institute of Development Economics, Islamabad.
- Moher, D., Liberati, A., Tetzlaff, J., Altman, D., & The PRISMA Group (2009). Preferred reporting items for systematic reviews and meta-analyses: The prisma statement. *Plos Medicine*.
- Munir, K., & Khalid, S. (2012). Pakistan’s power crisis: How did we get here? *The Lahore Journal of Economics*, 73–82.
- Nadir, R., Batool, F., Javaid, H., Ghazanfar, M., Bashir, S., & Naeem, H. (2024). Pauperisation and migration: The continuing violence of green revolution in rural Punjab, Pakistan. 13th Annual Conference of the AK South Asia (pp. 19–23). Eberswalde, Heidelberg: Heidelberg Asian Studies Publishing.
- Naveed, F., Muhammad, I. Z., & Nawaz, N. (2012). Socio-economic and cultural factors affecting migration behavior in district Faisalabad, Pakistan. *Pakistan Journal of Life and Social Sciences*, 28–32.
- Nizamani, B., Ram, M., & Nizamani, D. L. (2019). Sindh handicrafts and socio-economic status of women; A case study from district Tando Allahyar Sindh Pakistan. *Global Scientific Journals*, 7(2), 415–429.
- ODI (2016). *Women on the move: Migration, gender equality and the 2030 agenda for sustainable development*. ODI Global Thinkthank .
- Panhwar, G., Tahir, B., & Tunio, S. (2021). Female socio-economic conditions and feminisation of poverty in rural areas of district Larkana of Sindh, Pakistan. *Progressive Research Journal of Arts and Humanities (PRJAH)*, 76–88.
- Parvathy, M., & Hemalatha, K. (2021). Reproductive health vs overall well-being: systematic review of studies on women migration and health care utilisation. *International Journal of Migration, Health and Social Care*, 17, 390–401.
- Perveen, A. (1993). Inter-Provincial migration in Pakistan 1971–1981. *The Pakistan Development Review*, 725–735.
- PPPU Sindh (2024). About the Sindh province. Retrieved from public private partnership unit, Government of Sindh: <https://www.pppunitsindh.gov.pk/aboutsindh.php#:~:text=Sindh%20is%20the%20th,ird%20largest,Arabian%20Sea%20to%20the%20south>.
- Qaisrani, A. A. (2020). Reaching out, inviting in: Pakistan’s approach to diaspora engagement. *Migration and Development*, 1–20.

- Qureshi, N. R., Sheikh, S., Khowaja, R. A., Hoodbhoy, Z., Zaidi, S., Sawchuck, D., & Dadeslzen, P. (2016). Health care seeking behaviours in pregnancy in rural Sindh, Pakistan: A qualitative study. *Reproductive Health*.
- Ram, M., Nizamani, B., & Muhammad, A. (2024). Context of rural to urban migration and socio-economic empowerment of women in Pakistan and Philippines; A systematic literature review. *Asas Wa Tandhim: Jurnal Hukum, Pendidikan & Sosial Keagamaan*, 4, 1–14.
- Rola-Rubzen, M., Vuong, H., Doll, C., Rollings, C., Sarmiento, J., Alam, M., & Begum, I. (2023). Gender and rural transformation: A systematic literature review. *Journal of Integrative Agriculture*, 12, 3624–3637.
- Skeldon, R. (2006). Recent trends in migration in East and Southeast Asia. *Asian and Pacific Journal*, 277–293.
- Tabassum, S. (2023). Away from home—A systematic literature review of the factors and challenges of women migration. *International Journal of Business and Economics* 176–189.
- UN Women (2024). UN Women: The united nations entity for gender equality and the empowerment of women. Retrieved from United Nations: <https://www.un.org/youthenvoy/2013/07/un-women-the-united-nations-entity-for-gender-equality-and-the-empowerment-of-women/#:~:text=In%20July%202010%2C%20the%20United,and%20the%20empowerment%20of%20women>
- UN Women (2020). Migrant women & remittances: Exploring the data. New York, USA: UN Women.
- UN Women (2022). Factsheet: Gender aspects of migration in Asia. Asia and the Pacific: United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women).
- UN Women (2023). How migration is a gender equality issue. UN Women.
- United Nations (1995). United Nations International Conference on Women in 1995. Beijing: United Nations.
- United Nations (2000). UN Millennium Development Goals. United Nations.
- United Nations (2015). Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). United Nations.
- Wassan, M., Hussain, Z., Shah, M. A., & Amin, S. (2017). International labor migration and social change in rural Sindh, Pakistan. *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal*, 381–402.