

BOOK REVIEWS

Migration and Small Towns in Karachi, Pakistan, Eds., Arif Hasan and Mansoor Raza, Oxford University Press, Karachi, Pakistan, pp xii+205, n/p.

As title of the book suggest, migration plays a major role in shaping the size and distribution of the population developing countries of the world. Pakistani society is largely hierarchical and it emphasizes local cultural etiquettes and the traditional Islamic values, which governs both the personal and political life of majority of the population in small and big cities/towns. The important information which this book impart, is that, it is part of a large sponsored study [UK-based, International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED)], on governance for local development in small urban centre. The author aims to address the challenges and opportunities of increasing migration/emigration and the mobility. Its basic scope renders on secondary sources and census reports of the government of Pakistan. In addition, the previous work done by the authors and detailed interviews were also covered.

The authors visited three small towns: Mithi in southern Sindh, Uch in southern Punjab and Chiniot in central Punjab, chosen for this study. In these towns local population, community-based organizations (CBOs) various businesses, political representatives, ethnical and clan organizations; were interrelated and participated in the development that took place. Keenly, the authors mentioned the methodology which was followed in the interviewees, chosen carefully to represent the business people, NGOs workers, artisans, welfare associations, migrated people; and the legal and informal emigrants. These persons were identified by the Thar Rural Development Project (TRDP) in Mithi, the Conservation and Rehabilitation Centre (CRC) in Uch, and by the Nazir Ahmad Wattoo in Chiniot. There are no specific limitations, except the geographic areas plus its political and religious endures. No specific subjects were ignored and every single area was covered amazingly. The Table of contents is organized in a topical order, considering the Pakistan's political, demographic, social and geographical aspects. Mass migration is listed, including Indo-Pak wars and Afghan conflicts. Mithi, Uch and Chiniot are discussed in detail. The book ends with a fine messages of the authors. The first chapter focuses on the political structure of Pakistan, its demographic picture, poverty, physical conditions and unequal development, government programs and the impact of structural adjustment.

Pakistan is divided into four provinces with four provincial assemblies and a national assembly in the centre. Its population has tremendously increased after independence resulting in huge informal settlements in peri-urban areas of the cities. By 1981 the first author of the book, adopted a new definition of urban areas which gave a boost to rural population. Poverty in Pakistan, encloses economic state on daily basis plus its national poverty line, life expectancy at birth, adult literacy rate, and the adult participations at university level. It portrays that poverty incidences declined in 1987-88 due to higher level of economic growth and pro-poor government policies. Thus, the unemployment rate increased. Urban marriages are rapidly declining while in rural areas, the change is less pronounced. In addition, infant mortality, undernourished population, human resource problems and immunization of children are also pointed. Gender issues, gender related development and gender empowerment are also measured. There are many aspects of poverty yet one positive situation of Pakistan is that it ranks 4th in the HDI among seven south Asian countries.

Physical conditions demonstrate difference of sanitation, congestion at home level, and water supply to urban and rural areas. The demand-supply gap has reduced to great extent by creation of informal settlements which is of two types: katchi abadis (informal settlements) on state land and the development of sub-serviced settlements through the informal sub-division of agricultural land (ISAL). Due to communication problems these kachi abadi are decreasing. There are government programmes for poverty alleviation like KARIP. World Bank and the Asian Development Bank have extended to loans them heavily, but unfortunately they have not been successful due to many reasons. In the past five years the two important funds for poverty alleviation, the Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF) and the Khushal Pakistan Fund (KPF) had been initiated. The working system involves community-level infrastructure projects in both the rural and urban areas.

Under the heading of the Impact of Structural Adjustment, WTO regime and globalization states, Pakistan experienced the structural adjustment. Social and agriculture sectors were considerably shortened, affecting health, education, social housing, employment and incomes. About privatization of services such as water, sanitation, electricity and telecommunications, it quoted about the WTO regime, the culture of globalization, global capital; deprived fishing, agriculture, urban communities of land and means of livelihoods. Opposition from civil society, cooperate farming concepts are also shared. Conclusively, all these factors lead to direct bearing on migration and future of small towns.

In Chapter two, the book highlights the basic geographic setting and its relation to social and migration aspects. It places Pakistan in three basic regions: i.e., Indus basin, the closed basin of Kharan dessert of Baluchistan and the Makran coastal basin. The northern mountains like Karakoram, Himalayas and Hindu Kash are mentioned with their agricultural and other human importance. People from the high mountain region migrate from areas which are directly on the trade routes.

With the end of the old barter economy and the building of communication networks, the unkind climatic conditions prevent cash-related productive activities except for tourism and increased migration.

The western highlands of Pakistan are large, dry, rock-strewn and thinly inhabited. Touching south from the Pothwar plateau towards Baluchistan, the drought increases in major parts of the desert. Small communities carry out rain fed agriculture and nomadic pastoral activity. Communication system and infrastructure is a problem leading to migration. Mostly, manual labors are the one who has to move. The Indus plains are to south of the mountains and between the Indian frontier in the east and the western highlands. They lengthen down to the Indus delta country into the south. The entire region is flat and the soil consists of fine alluvium deposited by the Indus and its tributaries. The area can be divided into upper and lower plains and most of it is waterless. Vegetation is along river side including tamarisk and tali forests. In the delta region there are also substantial mangrove forests. Income and literacy rate is high, thus the migration of skilled, educated people and entrepreneurs from the villages to the urban areas is seen. East of the lower Indus plain are the deserts of Nara and Thar in Sindh, and of Cholistan in the Punjab. These deserts extend east to Indian Rajasthan. There is productive and good crop of millet yield and other grains after the monsoon rains in these flat areas. However, with the construction of roads and growth of political motion, and the administrative structures, the area is rapidly altering. Urban population is increasing as a result of new, urban-based economic activities.

In Chapter three, migration and its repercussions are focused. In 1947, Pakistan received a large volume of migrants from India and from the neighboring countries. The development of Punjab canal colonies, migration from India, its socioeconomic impact, physical impact and the case of Sindh, are periodically covered. Punjab irrigation, their pros and cons, methods and education negligence that led to migration are stated. There is a language difference and a massive physical difference in old and new settlement pattern. There are many movements that took place demanding government jobs and improved infrastructure; which is actively promoting language and culture.

The 1947 migration from India was first and the mass migration which increased the populations by about 6.36 per cent; basically settled in Sindh and Punjab. There are many reasons for refugees settling in the Punjab and Sindh. The migration from India had a major impact on sociology, economics and politics of Pakistan. The physical impact of migration from India to the cities in Punjab and Sindh were considerable. The Muslim refugees took over the inner cities in which the rich Hindus and Sikhs were residing. Parks and playgrounds were turned into reception areas of refugees. The case of Sindh is different from Punjab. Mostly, the Punjabi speaking settled in Punjab and therefore there were few conflicts while this wasn't the case of Sindh. The void created by the departing Hindus and Sikhs was also filled by migration from the Punjab and NWFP.

Secondly, since 1947 India and Pakistan fought three wars in 1948, 1965 and 1971, and occasionally many small battles took place at the borders. The Kargil conflict also took place in 1997. All these wars brought refugees to Pakistan. The 1948 conflict resulted in the division of Kashmir and large number of Kashmiris migrated to Pakistan. They got settled in the Azad (free) Kashmir, the Pakistani part. The rulers of Kashmir, the Hindu rajas were forced to leave Kashmir, thus ending the old feudal system. In the 1965 war, Pakistan captured a large area of the Indian territory of Thar Desert, but in 1971 the case was vice versa. Following the 1965 and 1971 wars, the Hindu upper casts and their retainers fled to India. As a result, the feudal institutions that managed the agricultural activities and the maintenance of infrastructure collapsed in Pakistan. The Soviet invasion to Afghanistan and the subsequent jihad and civil war, pushed 3.7 million Afghan refugees to Pakistan, resulting in the mass migration of refugees. The 1971 war in Bangladesh for independence from Pakistan resulted in the migration of non-Bengalis from Bangladesh (then East Pakistan) to West Pakistan. However, this migration was comparatively small and limited, only to Karachi. Most migrants settled in the Orangi Town, one of the 18 towns which constitute the Karachi City Districts. There are number of other issues that have also been pointed like election of local bodies and prostitution activities by Bengali and Burmies females.

In Chapter four the authors narrow their concerns specific to rural-urban migration. The scale of migration, its cause, process and its social, physical and political impacts are distinguished and marked by defining a migrant as someone who has resided in some other district or tahsil previous to the time of the current census. The migration took place from the needy areas to industrial areas. The main cause could be the family related issues or changes that have taken place in the socioeconomic environment of villages. Freedom from feudal system, the capital earned in urban, education especially for girls and competition among families are also the main reasons. The canal colonies in Punjab, migration from India in 1947 followed by green revolution technologies in 1960s along with the mechanization of transport from village to market changed the barter economy to a cash economy. These changes together changed subsistence agriculture to a capital-intensive system, and generated a demand for cash which the village economy simply could not generate for the poorer population. In case of the northern areas (NAs) of Pakistan, the Aga Khan Development Network has promoted education and development. A large number of students have come to Karachi for higher studies and many of them have settled here and married Karachi girls of their own community. This completely changed the sociology and economy of NAs and promoted more migration to Karachi. In the process of migration, families staying in urban areas helped the other families and friends to settle in new place. Most migrants from the NWFP and Azad Kashmir do not bring their families until they have a permanent job/earning and a house in an informal settle-

ment. Political leaders helped people from their areas to get jobs in Karachi. Ethnicity and professions have also been interlinked. First camels, then carts and then pickups and eventually trucks and containers are used as means of transport. The government institutions failed whereas ethnic organizations have become stronger by providing housing, employment and justice to emigrants. Now, people travel daily by bus, train, motorbike or bicycle to work. The creation of the underserved informal settlements both within and on the periphery of urban areas can be seen.

Water pollution is discussed as major health hazard. In physical impact, wholesale markets, older elite areas, citizens' entertainment/livelihood needs are discussed. There is demise of the old caste system resulting ineffectiveness of the old feudal institutions leading to superior social and economic mobility. The most important social impact of migration in Pakistan has been on rural society. The traditional way of living and entertainment is no longer followed in rural areas. Agriculture has extremely declined. At the household level, old type utensils have been replaced by plastic and metallic ones. Even the dowry trend changed to industrial and electronics articles rather than clothes or village stuff. An immense desire of rural and small-town residents to educate their children is due to the materialization of cash economy and increased social mobility. Another major change has been the education of girls which the migrants have promoted. The period merchant class increased financially but the political power rested with big feudal families.

In the fifth Chapter the author discussed the causes of emigration, as well as the kind of areas to which they migrate to. Its scale and destination has decreased as majority of the Pakistanis have immigrated to Saudi Arabia, Dubai and other Islamic countries due to establishment of major industries expanding exploration of gas and oil. Emigration to Europe has also increased but through illegal means which afterwards put them in problems. Foreign remittance and its impact on Pakistan's economy present the relationship between the real GDP growth and workers' remittance. The socio-economic impact of foreign remittance has indicated that they haven't benefited economically because of the emigration factor. Human smuggling and trafficking includes camels as major asset and ironically the emigrants belong to conservative minds. Makran in Baluchistan had major strike. Emigrant organizations role in socio-economic development has minimal investment. Developed countries have best-organized associations. Pakistani doctors have been most active in making investments. There are the World Sindhi Congress, Baluchistan organizations abroad, Overseas Pakistani foundation for social security, housing facilities, pension schemes, accidental injuries and death compensation at the time of crises. Emigration could be legal or illegal. Some bureau or organization would support its legal entity while illegal migration is difficult to estimate, due to informal recruitments. Informal remittance is preferred by most Pakistani emigrants but

they also send money through 'hindu' or 'hawala'. There are number of laws to facilitate emigration and overseas employment by the government of Pakistan. The government has discontinued the policy of official exchange rate and floated the rupee; eliminating bank charges for remittance of emigrants.

Chapter six is about the small towns categorizing into three types: first, the market towns which were on the river bank, second, the towns on the regional trade routes, and third, are the mixture of both. Then the changes and their objectives brought, due to colonization, since independence are discussed. These changes are highlighted stating that big cities replaced small towns, as major demographic changes have taken place in Pakistan, since independence, with major impact on the political and economic power of small towns.

In Chapter seven, three small towns were selected because there was huge difference between their natural and geographical characteristics. Mithi is a desert; chiniot is fast growing town and Tharparkar is the most backward as compared to the two. Mithi is located in the desert region of Thar in Sindh province. The Thar Desert, from which the name Tharparkar is derived, is also known as the Great Indian Desert, with major part of it in the Indian state of Rajasthan. The social structure with heterogeneous population, seasonal migration due to rain and drought and process of change forming newly irrigated areas is also discussed. The drought and capital issues became main reason for emigrants to Mithi. The result of migration is that lifestyle in the rural areas has changed and interest in agriculture has declined. Some people have migrated from Mithi as there are better working conditions and more wages in larger cities. Another reason of their migration is the education of girls. The old system collapsed due to declining interest in agriculture and increase in desertification that had great impact of migration and different castes who interact equally. People migrate to cities with the help of their friends, relatives and family members who are already settled in cities. The TRDP has played an important role in governance related issues in Mithi. It has acted as a conduit between problems of people and the government agencies. The powers of traditional elite still hold the authority, despite the significant social change.

Uch is a small town in southern Punjab in Bahawalpur district. It is divided into three different quarters, the oldest of which is the Uch Bokhari. The second quarter is known as Uch Jilani and the third quarter is the Uch Mughlian. All these quarters are named after the Sufi's. The old social structure, the process of changes and reasons of migration from villages to Uch and Uch to bigger cities of these quarters are similar to mithi. The impact of migration and emigration gives for the scale of migration from Uch. Life in Mithi, the family and friends help others to migrate. The land belongs to Pir's. The devolution plan has strengthened the feudal power, as it has curtailed the power of bureaucracy and increased the power of elected representatives. Therefore, in Uch, as in Mithi, the feudal system still dominates politically, despite the social revolution that has taken place.

Chiniot is one of the oldest towns of Punjab. It is located on the bank of river Chenab, the second largest river of Pakistan. Its location has made it important for trading. The social structure and green revolution is similar to the Uch and Mithi towns with rich historical importance. It is linked to major cities because of its timber related skills and trade. However, the community is still conservative. Small and medium size industries are established at the outskirts of Chiniot city. The creation of canal colonies by the British increased the agricultural production; as a result, the market towns became important and people migrated to them. After migration the sheikh tribe came into power as migration increased the possibility of learning carpentry, masonry skills, education of children, improving kachi abadi (slums) and earning more profits by poor families. Thus, the demand for skilled carpenters in the Middle East was met by Chinioties, resulting flight of more capital in the country. This had a great impact on poor people, which led business to flourish within and outside Chiniot. A small amount of money that was being produced in Chiniot was invested in social services and remittance earned abroad was turned by the business class to the artisans to improve their households and houses in the old city. Real estate agents purchased plots from those who migrated to big cities; and thus, the small businesses in Chiniot were destroyed and presently, there is no future for the unskilled persons. The process of migration is same as that of Uch and Mithi. Governance which comprises of local MNA, MPA and district nazims, all belong to the powerful traditional political groups. The timber business too gets no support from the government.

The authors of the book broadly conclude, saying that, remittance from abroad have had a positive impact on Pakistan's economy. Second, remittance from within Pakistan have (from improved to unimproved places) been used mainly for improving lifestyles and houses of the migrants. Third, emigration and migration have promoted education, more liberal values, emancipation of women and NGOs activities. Fourth, with the pound of education and better lifestyle, the new generation migrated or emigrated families wish to live in the larger cities because of better physical and social environment. Fifth, the political powers remain firm with traditional land-owning elites in small towns, despite the social and economic changes. Lastly, a number of issues need to be addressed regarding process and ramification of migration that may be legal or illegal. The main point which is focused at the end is the question asked to the audience in an interview i.e., is it worth migrating or emigrating? Most people agreed but some said very deep words justifying their act starting that nobody wants to leave his/her home and family but the circumstances forced them to do so. At the end of the book the text is broadly supported by a number of boxes, statistical tables, maps and interviews.

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