



## **Context of Rural to Urban Migration and Socio-Economic Empowerment of Women in Pakistan and Philippines; a Systematic Literature Review**

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### **Abstract**

The movement of people from rural areas towards urban units is understood as rural-to-urban migration. Women empowerment is the process that leads women to ownership of resources, improves their ability to control their lives and families, and allows them to make decisions to develop new strategies in life. The rural-to-urban migration in Pakistan changes the socioeconomic status of women through their engagements in formal job markets and increases earning sources through paid or professional work. In the Philippines, the economic driver is one of the primary and dominant forces for rural-to-urban migration. This study aimed to assess the impacts of migration on women's socio-economic status. Also, it focused on exploring migration trends and women's engagement in the labour market after migration in both countries.

**Keywords:** Migration, Rural, Urban, Socio-Economic, Women Empowerment

### **Introduction**

The movement of people from one place to another place for the reasons of livelihood or refugee, for the search for a better life or due to natural disasters is an ongoing process in human history. Human migrations happen within countries and from country to country or continent to continent. The migrations within the country are mainly seen as rural to urban types of migration. Many migrations nowadays are internal but still internal within the country (UNDP, 2009). In today's world, more than half the population is living in urban areas, which results in an increase in highly dense cities. This urban setting is one of the new phenomena of human history (Ritchie & Roser, 2019). The current urban population in the world is 55 per cent of the total population, and it is expected to increase to 68 per cent by the year 2050. It is also likely that steady change in human living setup from rural settings towards urban settings, together with the overall world's population growth, will add another 2.5 billion people to urban areas by 2050; the major percentage will take place in Asia and Africa, and that will be 90 per cent increase (United Nations, 2018).

According to another study by (Population Reference Bureau, 2001), an increase in urban population in the coming three decades will happen in Asia, especially in China and India, but it will also occur in Pakistan, Bangladesh, the Philippines and Vietnam. The overall urbanization rate in Asia by 2030 will be 53 percent. Internal migration from rural to urban areas is an essential strategy for livelihood as well as escape from poverty. It also becomes an income safety net while having income shortfall in rural areas due to various reasons. On the other side, there are lower economic and employment opportunities in rural areas, but on the other side, urban areas have more financial and employment opportunities. Migration also increases people's mobility and improves their communication (Deshingkar & Anderson, June 2004). Urbanization is associated with an increase in economic, social as well and political opportunities for migrated people, but it increases these things for women more than men. A decrease in gender-related issues occurs after migration to urban areas; urban women enjoy some more benefits compared to rural women. The barriers for women decrease, but these almost remain the same in poor urban (Chant, 2013).

Migration is one of the survival strategies in developing countries like Pakistan and the Philippines today. It has both positive and negative implications for migrating people and their communities who send or receive them. This study aims to find out the impacts of rural-to-urban migration on the social and economic status of women. The study also discusses the trends and types of migration in both these countries: Pakistan and the Philippines.

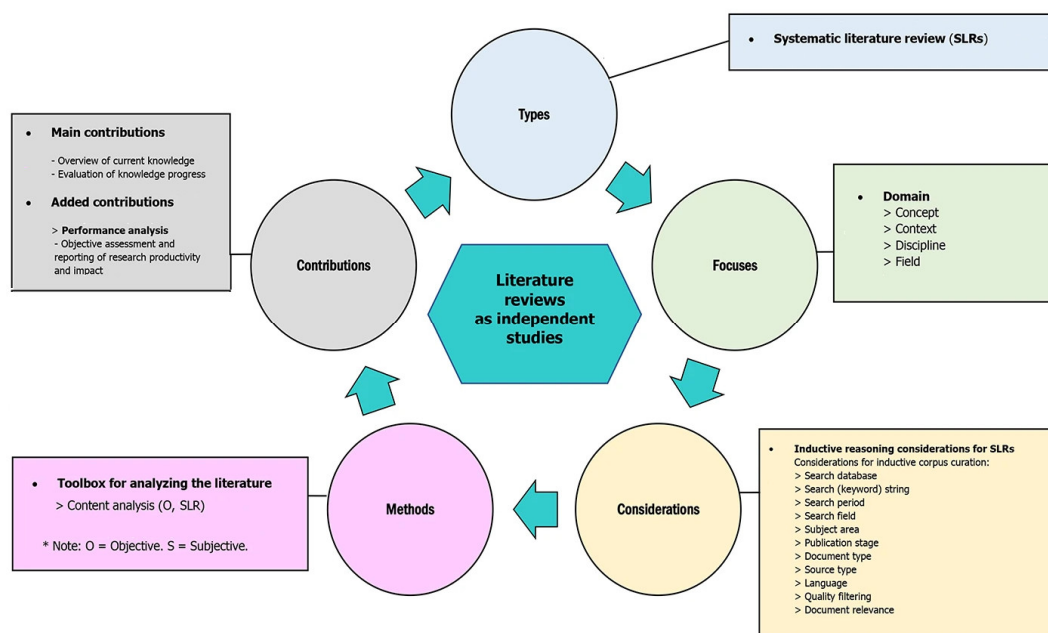
Study Objectives. The study aims to focus on the empowerment of migrated women. To assess women's empowerment in both Pakistan and the Philippines, the study has focused on two key aspects: the socio-economic empowerment of women in both countries and the socio-economic characteristics of the migrated women in both countries.

## **Methods**

The research study is a qualitative type of research based on the results by applying a systematic literature review approach. The literature review applied Systematic Literature Review (SLR). The literature review focused on the domains including concept, context, disciplines and different files in the available literature. The content analysis tool has been applied for this specific literature review under the systematic literature review. The main contributions of this literature review may be in the shape of a review of current knowledge and an evaluation of knowledge progress; additionally, the added contributions can be the performance analysis. Figure 01 below mentions further about this literature review

Figure 01

Literature Review as Independent Studies

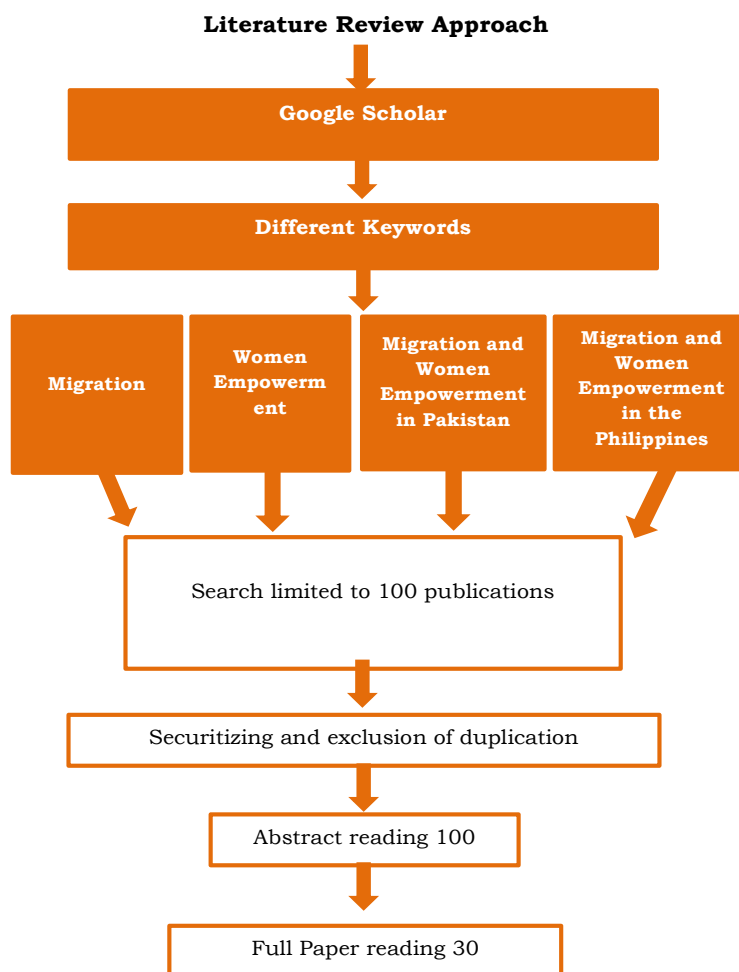


This literature review has studied various sources of the available literature. The sources of the literature review include published articles in journals and published research. This review has taken the context of migration, the dynamics of migration, migration, women empowerment, and socio-economic economic empowerment specifically. The literature review has been done from different years based on the available data sources on google scholar.

1)The first step of the review was to search different research articles on Google Scholar for the material. Searching on Google Scholar was helpful in finding the published articles. 2) Different keywords were applied in the second step to search the related research articles and publications. The areas of search mainly included migration, women empowerment, and socio-economic empowerment. 3) At the third step of this literature review, 300 plus articles were found. The articles on Google Scholar were random, so in the next search, the keywords were limited to migration and women's empowerment in Pakistan. Similarly to the Philippines, there were about 100 plus papers on the next search strategy for both contexts. 4) The fourth step involved securitizing and excluding duplicate material or material unrelated to the review's objectives. 5) The fifth step of this systematic literature review involved reading 100 abstracts to further scrutinize the material. There were 30 related papers, and the data of those papers was extracted. 6) The final step of the literature review is followed by reading 30 full papers.

Figure 02

Search Inclusion and Exclusion Strategy / Step followed for search



## Result And Discussion

### Thematic Analysis

#### Understanding Women Empowerment

It has been a long history of debate on the issues of gender equality and empowerment in past decades. There are adverse impacts on development without concerning women's role in society. United Nations International Conference on Women in 1995 in Beijing also focused on increasing women's empowerment and reducing gender inequality. UN's Millennium Development Goals 2015 also took gender equality and women empowerment as the third main target. Sustainable Development Goals 2030 (UN, 2015) has especially focused on reducing gender inequality and women empowerment as its fifth main target is to "achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls". Various countries, regions, and international developmental organizations or forums have committed to ending gender inequality for sustainable economic development.

The idea of empowering women is complex and ever-evolving, going through processes of defining, redefining, detailing, refining and clarifying. It is closely linked with achieving gender equality and fairness, which are often seen as the goals of empowering women. This includes making

changes in society, such as land and labour reforms, providing opportunities and ensuring fair access to resources. Moreover, it involves promoting independence, guaranteeing the right to make decisions and supporting control over fertility. Empowerment also covers women's authority over their bodies, sexuality and reproductive decisions, presenting an approach to reaching gender equality and social fairness. (AF, January 2011). As per the report from the Planning Commission of (Government of Pakistan, 2005), empowerment is described as involving the availability of choices, knowledge, learning opportunities and assets, along with the ability to make decisions and have authority and influence over one's life.

The term women empowerment has been understood in different ways, which vary in the social, economic or political context where it is used (Mujahid et al., 2017). According to a report by the World Bank (2001), empowerment is described as the enhancement of women's freedom to make choices and take action, leading to an increase in their power and influence over resources and decisions that affect their lives. Women's empowerment is seen as a journey where women acquire ownership of resources, learn how to manage them, and plan out their life paths (Kabeer, 2001).

However, the women empowerment process depends on women through the availability of education, skills development, capacity building, training or women-friendly legal and structural frameworks. There are other different broad explanations of women's empowerment. According to (Malhotra et al., 2002), women's empowerment includes social, economic, cultural, political, legal and psychological dimensions. Women empowerment is also the process of guarding women against all forms of violence. It also highlights the importance of building a community where women feel safe from mistreatment, abuse, fear, bias and the constant feeling of being targeted that usually comes with being a woman in a society dominated by men (Shali, 2018).

#### Rural to Urban Migration

Every country in the world experiences migration all the time. But it depends from region to region in terms of type or reasons of migration, some migrations occur for some favourable conditions, due to more populated spaces or for more economic chances towards economic zones. In developing countries mainly migration occurs for employment possibilities or sufficient housing facilities towards cities. The problems like unemployment or poverty are faced by people who lead them towards migration. The migration from rural to urban areas is an internal type of migration; it is a movement within the country. It is the movement of people from countryside or rural areas towards urban areas, especially metropolitan cities as well as other cities. Migration brings a change in peoples' economic status because there are often more economic opportunities in urban areas for migrated people. It brings career change

among migrated people in all sectors: primary, secondary or third sector (Fischer, 2009).

The push and pull factors bring crucial changes and consequences in the origin and destination of migrants. According to (Fischer, 2009), the increase in the number of people who are migrating from rural to urban can impact in many ways; the fast urban growth caused by migration results in a lack of housing facilities in cities. So, the newcomers towards cities can face housing problems, or on the other hand, they need to settle in small-sized towns or slums or poor areas of the cities, which may not bring such positive impacts on their overall life. Migration can also result in a significant increase in the proportion of people living in cities. It seems that rural-to-urban migration usually means the migration of working-age people towards the city for more earnings, but while they migrate, they leave behind further problems for rural development because young and skilled adults are missing in rural areas. On the other hand, such development can have a positive impact in the sense the migrated skilled people can support back their families and strengthen their livelihood, but it is only in the case of migration for employment purposes and single migration of skilled workers.

The rural-to-urban migration also leaves a great impact on the social, cultural and economic dimensions of the migrant's life and destination (Malik, 2015). Another significant contribution of migration to urban units is an increase in higher incomes, investments in human capital and acquisitions of household assets (Basa & Villamil, 2009).  
Context of Rural to Urban Migration and Women Empowerment in Pakistan

In various studies from Asia, migration trends and impacts have also been found. In the case of Pakistan internal migration process is an old phenomenon (Parveen, 1993). The nature and volume of internal migration vary from time to time, so the impact on households and the economy also varies (Waseem, 1981). In Pakistan, many researchers have contributed valuable research on migration, including population censuses, labour force surveys and special surveys like population surveys, migration and labour forces surveys, which contribute widely to migration studies (Memon, 2017). All these researches have included issues in a wide range, such as the impact of human capital on migration decisions, the impact of migration on the well-being of migrant households, the patterns of migration, and inter- or intra-provincial migrations. Closely analyzing these studies, it can be revealed that they have largely focused on the migration rate, directions of migration flows, and factors affecting the migration decisions or earnings of migrants and non-migrants (Shahnaz, 2010). Some studies have focused on gender perspective, women's roles, or impacts on women, but this component is missing largely from the research, especially in gender dimensions in internal migration.

The study by Arif et al. (2007) concluded that rural-to-urban migration is dominating internal migration in Pakistan. Another study by Mahmud et al. (2010) stated that, interestingly, rural-to-urban migration in Pakistan is mainly towards higher population densities, while a more densely populated district may not accommodate more people.

Table 01  
Urban Versus Rural Population of Pakistan

	2005	2010	2015	2020
Rural Population (M)	103.9	111.3	118.4	124.1
Urban Population (M)	54.7	62.2	71.2	81.2
Percentage Urban	35.4	35.9	37.6	39.5

Table Source: (Blank, Clary, & Nichiporuk)

Pakistan's urbanization is not a recent phenomenon. It has experienced a fast growth in urbanization at least after 1971. According to the UN Population Division's projections, it will grow continuously and accelerate more in the upcoming time, as analyzed in Table 1 above. The growth rate of the urban population in Pakistan was 4.1 percent between 2005 and 2010 and 4.7 percent between 2010 and 2015.

The old and recent studies have discussed migration trends and impacts in Pakistan widely. According to Labour Force Survey (2017-18) the reasons of rural to rural-to-urban migration include education, job searching, job transfer, business or change in law and order situation but the main reasons for migration are tied migration with the family include 33.1% due to marriage, 21.09% with parents and 10.81% with the spouse.

Table 02  
Migrant Population 10 Years of Age and over by main reasons of Migration, Sex and Area 2017-18

Main Reason for Migration	Migrant Population								
	All Areas			Rural			Urban		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
TOTAL	100.00	43.84	56.16	44.73	19.34	25.40	55.27	24.50	30.77
Job Transfer	2.13	2.02	0.11	0.76	0.71	0.05	1.37	1.31	0.06
Found a Job	5.67	5.51	0.16	1.38	1.33	0.05	4.28	4.18	0.11
Searching for a Job	5.32	5.12	0.21	1.31	1.25	0.06	4.01	3.87	0.15
Searching for a better agriculture land	0.99	0.89	0.10	0.74	0.71	0.04	0.24	0.18	0.06
Education	1.38	0.97	0.42	0.28	0.17	0.11	1.11	0.80	0.31
Business	1.55	1.48	0.07	0.35	0.31	0.04	1.20	1.17	0.04
Health	0.12	0.09	0.03	0.06	0.05	0.01	0.06	0.04	0.02
Marriage	33.81	0.88	32.93	17.35	0.37	16.98	16.46	0.50	15.96
With Parents	21.09	13.24	7.85	7.85	4.92	2.93	13.24	8.32	4.92
With Spouse	10.81	0.27	10.55	3.75	0.08	3.67	7.06	0.18	6.88
With Son/ Daughter	1.04	0.27	0.77	0.37	0.10	0.27	0.67	0.17	0.49
Change of Residence	3.10	2.17	0.93	1.11	0.85	0.25	2.00	1.32	0.68
Returned to his home	9.53	8.83	0.70	8.00	7.51	0.49	1.53	1.33	0.21
Security/ Law & order situation	1.05	0.64	0.41	0.39	0.27	0.12	0.66	0.37	0.29
Other	2.40	1.47	0.93	1.04	0.71	0.34	1.36	0.76	0.60

Table Data Source: (Labour Force Survey 2017-18)

A study by (Aziz, 2014) has concluded that there is a strong relationship between migration and the socioeconomic empowerment of women; it has left a great change in their lives. The women’s status changes with the movements of men out of the home; in that case, women get more empowered in almost every kind of decision-making. In the patriarchal society, men are the major decision-makers, but the situation changes after migration to urban units. After migration, the women also engage themselves in some income generation activities, and with their financial growth, their social status in the family also changes, which enables them to make family-related decisions. The independence in the family also leads them to have a strong societal position outside of the home.

Figure 03

Migration and Socio-Economic Empowerment of Women

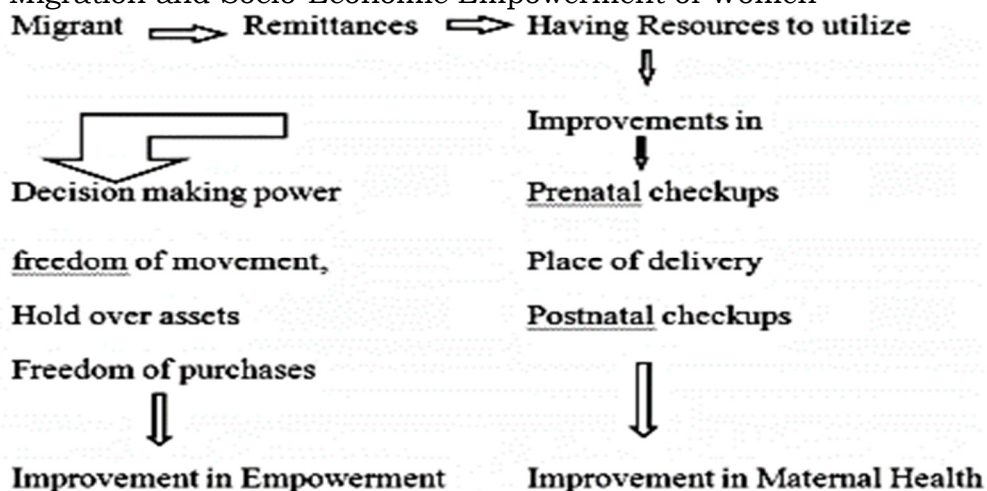


Figure Source: Manzoor & Idress, 2014

In the above figure 03, the study Manzoor & Idress (2014) explained that the remittances which women receive strengthen them towards great access to economic and financial resources, increase their social networking, empower their power to bargain and enable them towards freedom of movement. It is found by the study that there is a positive and strong relationship between remittances and women's empowerment; it further explains that women who receive more remittances are more empowered as compared to those who receive fewer remittances.

It is seen that in the rural areas, the contribution of women is not acknowledged more in terms of their engagement in economy generation activities, mainly in rural areas women are engaged in low-paid work, vulnerable jobs or they have engagement in informal job sector as well as they do unpaid work at home or in agricultural fields (UN Women, 2018). However, the situation changes after migration because of their engagement in the formal job sector, in paid work, or the professional type of work that empowers them economically. This empowerment also



changes their social status and social roles and leads them towards social empowerment. The study by (Farooq & Cheema, 2005) has concluded that migration empowers women socially by increasing their social mobility and economic freedom as well as their relative autonomy in movement with family. It leads them towards their control in family-related matters as well as greater participation in family-related decision-making.

#### Context of Rural to Urban Migration and Women Empowerment in the Philippines

According to figures from 2016 by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), the Philippines' total population stands at over 103 million. The annual growth rate of the population is 1.5 percent. Internal migration from the Philippines makes up a major portion of the population. There are about 2.9 million people in the Philippines who changed their residence between the years of 2005 to 2010. The long-distance migration among these is 50.4 per cent, short-distance migration is 45.4 per cent, and the remaining 4.2 per cent is international migration; this small number of people has migrated to other countries. Rapid urbanization is experienced by the Philippines; there is fast growth in urbanization day by day. The urban population of the Philippines has increased at an annual rate of an average of 3.3 per cent; it makes the Philippines one of the fastest-growing urbanized countries in the Asia-Pacific (Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education, 2018).

It is seen that the migration of females is very significant, especially in rural-to-urban migration cases. The data from one island, Mindanao, shows that the movement of females constitutes 56.3 per cent of the migration population which migrated out. It is also one of the facts that 46 per cent of the migrating population is single or unmarried, and 24 per cent has at least a graduate degree from high school. People of young ages are attracted to migration to seek good education or employment opportunities (Quisumbing & McNiven, 2006). The initial movement from rural to urban areas relies on support from family or friends towards the destination; in most cases, the migrating people live with their relatives earlier, and in some cases, the self-supported movement also happens. The migrated women mainly live with their families, offspring or spouses (Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education, 2018).

According to figures by Trading Economics (2019), the highest rate of urban population growth was reported at 1.375 percent in 2016. As per a study by Anderson et al. (2017), Economic drivers are one of the key drivers for internal migration. The key and dominant force of internal migration in the Philippines is the economic driver. The people are attracted by employment opportunities, which leads them to migrate because of the low availability of income generation sources in rural areas as compared to urban areas. Education is always one of the important drivers of internal migration; mainly, young males and females migrate from rural to urban areas for their further education. Gender norms also

play a role in migration as an underlying determinant, which leaves pressure on young females to migrate in most cases. In the Philippines, it has been seen that women face particular pressure for migration to bear a major responsibility to provide economic support to their families more than young boys or men. It can also be taken that women have special obligations to send remittances back to their families to support them. Social networks play a role as one of the drivers of internal migration but also as challenges to migration.

Figure 04  
Urban Population Growth (Annual %)

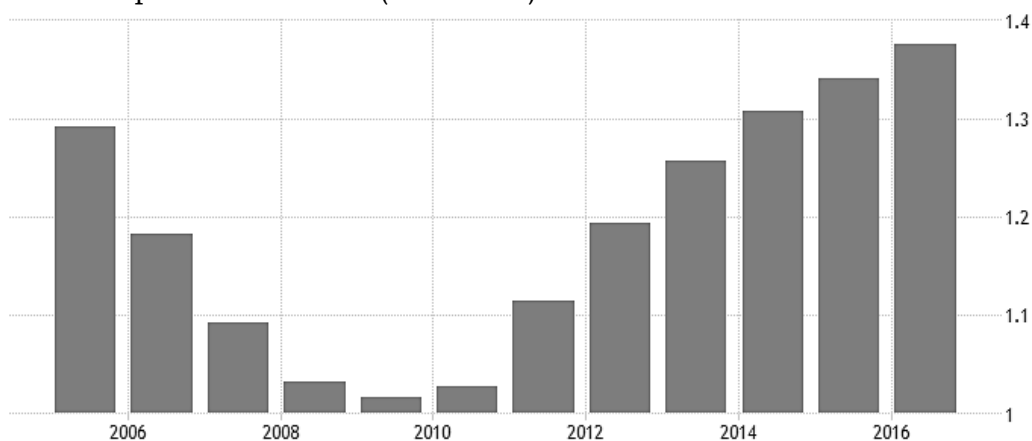
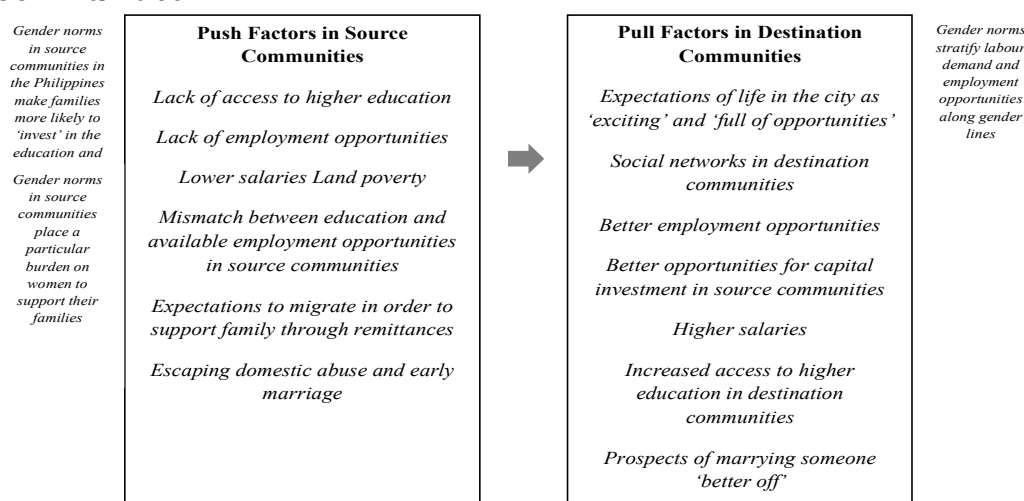


Figure Source: Trading Economics, 2019

In some cases, the social network is a facilitating agent of internal migration. It is also seen that marriage plays a push or pull factor for internal migration for women especially. The adventure of the city and the excitement of settling down in a new environment are also among the driving factors of internal migration, but mainly in young girls (Anderson et al., 2017).

Figure 05  
Push Factors in Source Communities and Pull Factors in Destination Communities



Data Source: (Anderson, Apland, Dunaiski, & Yarrow, 2017)

The barriers to international migration include very few resources for migration, gender norms, family settings, property-related issues, limited access to information about migrating destinations, social norms which limit women in limited settings and men's control over it and control on women's sexuality. On the other hand, when the migration push and pull factors enable them to migrate, then there are various facilitating factors. The facilitating factors include social networks of friends or family at the destination, available opportunities by recruiting organizations, a safe environment and secure working options at the destination (Anderson et al., 2017).

### **Conclusion**

The rural to urban migration is internal migration in which the people migrate within the country. It can be understood as the movement of people from the countryside or rural areas towards urban units like big cities or developed urban settings. Migration brings an economic change in people's status by providing them with more economic opportunities, which also supports them in improving their social status. Women empowerment is the process that leads women to their ownership of resources, improves their ability to control their lives and families, and makes decisions to make new strategies in life. But women's empowerment also depends on the availability and access of women towards education, skills development, capacity building and legal and structural frameworks which are based on equality.

The rural-to-urban migration in Pakistan changes the socioeconomic status of women through their engagements in formal job markets and increasing earning sources through paid or professional type of work. The other factors which improve their social and economic empowerment include the increase in their social mobility and economic freedom, which is less as compared to their previous locality or the rural women. The migration also improves women's control of the family and improves their decision-making power in family-related decision-making. Though in Pakistan, migration is more tied with family due to migration, various doors of opportunities are also open for women, which leads them towards empowerment. In the Philippines, women face a particular pressure and burden to earn and support their families economically. The economic driver is one of the major and dominant forces for rural-to-urban migration in the Philippines. The good employment opportunities and sound earning sources attract people to migrate from rural to urban areas. Education is also among the driving forces behind women's migration from rural to urban areas in the Philippines. The factors involved as push factors for internal migration of women in the Philippines include lack of access to higher education, low earning opportunities, low salaries, poverty in rural areas, mismatch in educational and available employment

opportunities, search for income options and escaping from domestic abuse and early marriage.

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