The Impact of Social Remittances on the Dynamics and Direction of Social Change in Rural Areas of Gujrat Pakistan

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Abstract

Social remittances transfer ideas, identities, behaviors, and social capital from communities in receiving countries to those in sending countries. They represent the social and cultural assets that migrants carry with them as they move between these communities. Pakistan is one of leading migrants producing countries in the world. People migrate to enhance their skills and to improve their economic status. Pakistan is facing problems of political insatiability and lack of democracy since its inception which ultimately worsening the economic condition of the country. An affluent class is ruling due to people's lack of awareness regarding their rights and responsibilities being as citizen of the country. Therefore, there is dire need to study the phenomenon in-depth. The primary objective of current study is to explore the impact of social remittances on the development of political awareness, the encouragement of civic engagement, and the fostering of citizenship within the selected area of study. Social remittances in this context encompass systems of practice, normative structures, and social capital. The research was carried out in Pakistan's Gujrat district, regarded as one of the top-generating regions for migrants. The head of the home in immigrant families served as the primary analytical unit for this study. To acquire data, non-probability sampling techniques were used. An ethnographic technique was used for collecting and analyzing data in order to meet the study goals. The study's conclusions show that families with members who have immigrated abroad have greater levels of civic participation and political understanding. The study's findings indicate that social remittances might be a valuable instrument for boosting civic participation, political knowledge, and active citizenship.

Keywords: *Social Remittances, Social capital, Political Awareness, Citizenship, Civic engagement, Pakistan*

1. Introduction

Discussions about migration often start with statistical data, as these numerical representations provide significant insights into the dynamic scales, developing patterns, and evolving global population characteristics influenced by socioeconomic transformations. A published study by United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) in 2019 is indicating that the global migrant population reached approximate of 273 million people, accounting for about 3.5 per cent of the total global population. In recent years, there has been a significant rise in the quantitative and relative dimensions of global migration.

In 2019, the total number of individuals residing in countries other than their countries of birth exceeded 1990 figures by approximately 119 million, nearly tripling the numbers recorded in 1970. Notably, the majority of individuals (96.5%) still reside in their place of origin, even though the overall number of overseas migrants is still a very tiny fraction of the global population, which is 3.5 per cent. However, it is essential to note that the projected number of international migrants—230 million, or 2.6 per cent of the world population—has already exceeded the projected trajectories for 2050, according to estimates from the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in 2020 and Ratha et al. in 2019.

A significant trend in international migration is the preference for high-income countries, with approximately two-thirds (176 million international migrants) residing in such nations in 2019, while 13 million were located in low-income countries during the same period. Various factors drive this migration to different parts of the world, including economic, political, security, trade, and cultural factors, which may have contemporary or historical roots (UN DESA, 2019).

Boom in migration tend to produce significant changes in both source and destination countries and it has captured the attention of researcher and scholars. The discourse surrounding migration has evolved significantly over time. Up until 1973, there existed an optimistic perspective on migration, which believed that the transfer of capital and knowledge by migrants could contribute to improving the economic conditions of developing countries, particularly through the return of migrants. However, the period from 1973 to 1990 witnessed increasing skepticism, with migration being viewed as a brain drain, leading to stricter migration policies. Subsequently, from 1990 to 2001, there was a shift towards more nuanced viewpoints, influenced by empirical research on migration, although the development aspect of migration was somewhat neglected. Post-2001, there was a surge in research on migration, particularly concerning remittances, which generally presented a positive outlook (De Hass, 2010).

Finally, a recent strand of the literature is focussed on social remittances, particularly trying to explore how different norms are transferred and bringing behavioural changes in the source countries. Social remittances have become myriad of concerns due to which migrants can affect their source countries through money and well beyond. Even though the notion of social remittances has been around for a while, Peggy Levitt first used the phrase "social remittances" in the late 1990s to describe the concepts, identities, behaviours, and social capital that move from source communities to destinations (Levitt, 1998: 926). According to Boccagni and Decimo (2013), social remittances are often seen as cultural dispersion made possible by transnational migration dynamics. Social remittances not only affect family relations, socio-economic wellbeing, gender roles but can also challenge the existing socio-political and religious norms of source countries (Garcia, 2018; Frederiks, 2014; Mata-Codesal, 2012) but the impact of social remittances on civic engagement, political awareness and citizenship has never been assessed, especially in the context of Pakistan. Therefore, this study bridges this gap.

2. Review of Literature

Migration is mainly about broader global economic, social, political, and technical upheavals influencing various policy challenges, as shown by the rising amount of research on the topic (Triandafyllidou, 2018). Because of the developing processes of the rise of globalization, these changes are increasingly influencing the daily lives of people, workplaces, and socio-spiritual spheres. As a result, researchers are beginning to investigate the link between immigration and social transformation. Cross-border ties between stayers and leavers have received much attention (Boccagni, 2012; Dreby, 2010), while social transformation in the source countries has received

less attention (Boccagni & Decimo, 2013). According to Levitt and Lamba-Nieves (2011), migrants are both the catalysts and the intermediaries of social change.

The migration driven social change has become a fundamental topic of social enquiry. It is not easy to measure the impact of migration on social change as it may diluted by other social processes (White, 2016). It is relatively easy to measure the economic impact of remittances through bank transfers, household investments, business investments, investments on health and education whereas it is extremely difficult to measure and conceptualise the migrants driven socio-cultural changes (Dzięglewski, 2016; Levitt, & Rajaram, 2013). The questions may range from how these resources transferred, what barrier they face and how they contribute to social change in the source communities. Most of the scholars have studied social remittances in motion stating its potential importance but without providing empirical data, theoretical depth, and development (Boccagni & Decimo, 2013).

In general context of migration theories, de Haas (2010) claimed that social remittances are contextual and are the secondary effects of migration in the context of culture, referring as migration-driven form of cultural or social change. Similarly, Elrick (2008) pointed that the impact of social remittances on source areas depends on the duration and type of migration. Some scholars have come to conclusion that development is part of wider presence of migration culture that channels and stimulates changes in both source and destination countries. These changes include system of practices, norms, values, and behaviours (Drinkwater & Garapich, 2013; Cohn & Sirkeci, 2011; Elrick, 2008).

Some scholars have worked on social remittances and tried to explore the relationship between international migration and civic engagement (Córdova & Hiskey, 2015; Goodman & Hiskey, 2008), and most of them concluded negative or no relationship between migration and civic engagement. For instance, Goodman and Hiskey had conducted a study in Mexico in (2008) on social remittances and concluded that high emigration rates decrease political participation but enhance civic engagement. Consequently, the research debate was started on how different channels of influence (social remittances, return migrants and absence of migrants) affect different political outcomes and level of civic engagement in Mexico and beyond (García, 2018; Waddell & Fontenla, 2015; Chauvet & Mercier, 2014; Germano 2013). However, research on social remittances come to mix conclusion. Chuvet and Mercier (2014) concluded more political participation rate in areas with high percentage of return migrants whereas Pérez-Armendáriz (2014) reported that higher level of return migrants leads to political apathy among Mexicans. Additionally, Kapur (2010) stated that shifts in emigration have a significant impact on political and civic engagement in local democracy. In a similar vein, Cordova and Hiskey (2015) concluded that informal forms of civic involvement and political awareness might grow as a result of ideas, behaviours, and norms spreading via migrants' international connections.

The problem with available literature on social remittances and social change in the context of source countries is, they are failed to operationalise the concept of social change. Moreover, due to methodological limitations, most of the studies used secondary data to measure the impact of social remittances. The indicator used to measure political participation and civic engagement are not clear. Therefore, there is a great need to decipher the phenomenon in-depth.

This study is a component of my doctoral research, whereby the notions of civic engagement, political involvement and awareness, and citizenship are examined as integral components of societal transformation. This study aims to elucidate the impact of social remittances on the transformation of political involvement and civic engagement within the designated research region. Moreover, this research will redirect the current discourse from the binary discussion of

the good or bad effects of social remittances on political engagement towards a broader examination of democratic processes and societal transformation. It will provide more perspectives on the impact of social remittances on the operation of the local democratic system, particularly within the specific context of Pakistan.

Here, the concept of political awareness is conceptualised as the extent to which citizens exercise their formal voting rights, participation in political activities, motivate their families and other community members to participate in electoral process. Theoretically, political participation and civic engagement make democratic system more responsive to the larger population (Brady et al., 1995; Putnam, 1994).

On the other hand, Pakistan is a home to a population of 184 million people (projected according to 1998 census), belonging to different religions and ethnic groups. Like other developing nations Pakistan is also facing the problem of citizenship and civic engagement. The main barriers to citizenship are lack of democratic culture, political instability weak institutional infrastructure, poverty, external incentives, and lack of awareness (Mahmood et al., 2014).

In recent times, the significance of civic engagement in upholding public accountability has gained considerable attention. Enhancing the performance of public services is a pressing concern, particularly in developing nations, and it holds a prominent position in national development plans and initiatives. However, despite concerted efforts, the persistent underperformance of public officials remains a persistent issue in Pakistan. Among the numerous factors contributing to this subpar performance, the absence of public accountability stands out as a major one. Accountability is not only a cornerstone of democratic governance but also a crucial component for enhancing the effectiveness of public officials, and this can be achieved through active civic engagement (Mohammadi et al., 2008).

In the present context, Pakistan grapples with issues related to extremism, cultural and religious intolerance. Additionally, challenges concerning civic engagement and citizenship are also prevalent. The resolution of these concerns requires a concerted and unified effort at the national level to combat any forms of animosity, coercion, provocation, and instances of physical harm that stem from a lack of acceptance. This research aims to delve deeper into these phenomena and add to the existing body of literature on the subject.

3. Conceptualising and Operationalising Civic Engagement

Civic engagement is a term used to describe an individual's inclination to actively participate in political or impartial activities to effect good change within a society (O'Connor, 2006). Political civic engagement remained focus in prior research such as voting behaviour, participation in electoral process, and organising political walks but social civic engagement has never been inconsistent in literature (Newell, 2011). Scholars researching political and civic participation have shown interest in several aspects, such as civic and political knowledge, political upbringing or awareness, political awareness, and voting behaviour (Coley & Sum, 2012; McIntosh & Munoz, 2009; Hillygus, 2005; Torney-Purta 2002). Political civic engagement encompasses several forms of political involvement, including but not limited to voting, engaging in political labour, actively participating in political organizations or parties, and contributing to election campaigns.

On the other hand, scholars working on social civic engagement have observed and operationalise the concept in multiple ways. The literature based on social civic engagement has used a variety of terms, including pro-social behaviour, humanitarian engagement, community-based engagement, expressive activities, civic activities, and social activities (Mahmoud et al., 2013; Pfutze, 2012; Newell, 2011; Stepick et al., 2008). Furthermore, some studies have narrow down the concept of social civic engagement and referred as volunteering in the community-based

organizations (Tong, 2010; Mclntosh & Munoz, 2009; Portes et al., 2007). The community is immediately impacted by social and civic participation, and the government may be indirectly impacted as well.

Based on literature, improvement in the level of political civic engagement and social civic engagement contribute to social change which ultimately strengthen the democracy. In this study, the concept of political civic engagement operationalised as the level of political participation, which is measured through voting behaviour, participating in political activities, and providing funding and volunteering during election. On contrary, social civic engagement is operationalised as participation in the community development programs which is measured through the level of participation in the welfare activities and community development programs and providing funding in such activities.

4. Research Question

The primary objective of this research is to explore the dynamics and directions of social change due to international migration. This study further decipher how emigration affects social capital and networks, pro-social behaviour, and informal exchanges in the home country. Moreover, it seeks to provide insights on the international migration of family members in creating political awareness, promoting civic engagement and citizenship in the study area.

5. Material and Methods

This study is part of my PhD research and is exploratory analytical in nature. It was conducted in village Kathala Chenab, Gujrat, Pakistan. Migrant member or the head of the household of migrant family was unit of analysis. The informants fulfilling the criteria were approached through networking sampling technique. Various attributes such as age, gender, educational level, occupation, social class, religion, and ethnicity were considered. Consent for interview and recording of informants were obtained after introducing the research topic and purpose of the research.

The research goals were successfully attained using a five-stage critical ethnographic methodology inspired by the approach outlined by Carspecken in 1996. This methodology facilitated an in-depth examination of how individual experiences are influenced by the surrounding social framework by analyzing social interactions within specific social contexts. Moreover, it enabled the assessment of the influence of social remittances on political awareness, civic engagement, and citizenship.

The research methodology consisted of five distinct stages. The first stage involved conducting narrative interviews to collect participants' introductory and background information. In the second stage, there were two sessions: the first session, termed 'Occupational Mapping,' required participants to create a mental map of their residential area, describing local spatial use and identifying their daily activities. Subsequently, I actively participated in one of the participants' routine or significant occupations, followed by engaging in additional activities in the second session. The third stage comprised in-depth interviews focused on political awareness, civic engagement, and citizenship, with follow-up questions stemming from prior sessions to enrich our understanding (Tanggaard, 2009). The fourth stage encompassed a critical review of government policies and documents related to social remittances. The fifth stage involved an iterative process of analysis and interpretation (Carspecken, 1996). All sessions were conducted in Punjabi and Urdu, with subsequent translation into English.

This study was guided by qualitative methodology with in-depth interviews, group discussion, and participant observations. Participant observation was conducted by observing the activities of participants, visiting them at their workplaces, having lunch at their places, and visiting their

residence according to their availability and permission. The in-depth interviews were performed Punjabi and Urdu. Some informants were interviewed several times to get in-depth information and to construct new themes. Moreover, semi-structured interview was used to some related parties, such as the husbands/wives, neighbors, or fellow community members to collect data during visits at workplaces or residences. The data from the other members was used to validate the information collected from the informants. Data was analyzed through thematic analysis.

6. Results and Discussion

It is expected to characterize the 21st century as one of flexibility and openness. Individuals are being encouraged to travel across borders regularly and to transcend national borders through advancements in technology, transportation, and culture. It is acknowledged that the quest for a universal theory of migration is both unattainable and not necessarily advisable. However, it is both viable and valuable to make contributions to various fields within the social sciences by positioning migration research within a broader comprehension of contemporary society and linking it with overarching theories of societal transformation (Castles, 2010). The conceptual framework for the study of migration should prioritize the concept of "transformation" as a central element, thus deepening our understanding of the intricate processes of migration within the context of rapid global change (Castles, 2016).

Traditionally, the concept of remittances in migratory research was used as the money transferred by migrants to their family members living in their source countries but with the passage of time this concept is taken beyond money. Moreover, remittances were studied in relation to poverty reduction and economic development. The concept of development changed over time. In the past, development or social change was seen as material development or economic growth but as the concept of remittance extended to social aspect of remittances, the concept of social change also changed. This study is part of my PhD research as earlier mentioned which seeks to measure the changes in source area due to socio-economic remittances. Here, the concept of social change is operationalised as change in political awareness which is also referred as political civic engagement, civic social engagement, and citizenship.

7. Social Remittances and Social Civic Engagement

In developing democracies different public agencies are finding ways to promote citizenship and civic culture among masses. Through civic engagement complex social problems including engendering trust, fostering a sense of community, citizenship and ethnic conflicts can be resolved. Typically, the civic engagement is referred to the voting behaviour and for going beyond this connotation serious attention and commitment is required.

In the past voting behaviour was typically referred as civic engagement but due to globalization and international migration, people have started seriously thinking about it. Almost all the developing countries have started showing concern to promote civic engagement while keeping in view its importance, they are adopting various strategies to promote civic engagement. In the present study social civic engagement was measured through level of participation in community development programs and social welfare activities.

8. Participation and Investment on Community Development in Programs

Community development has many different definitions. It has evolved through many different connotations. Community development has probably been practiced for as long as there has been community. The "war on poverty" in 1960s in US with its emphasis on solving the housing and social problems in neighbourhood has significant influence on contemporary community development (Green & Haines, 2015). In the present study, community development is operationalized as the activities initiated by the local government or community by itself for the

improvement of the area. To measure the impact of social remittances on the level of participation in the community development programs, an informal discussion and semi-structured interview method was used. Moreover, to counter check the response of participants their presence was observed in the ongoing development activities.

During field work, it has been observed that families with their members internationally migrated were actively participating in welfare activities and were investing money to fore the welfare of their community. According to the findings of the study those families who have their members internationally migrated were more politically aware as compared to their counterparts. For example, one of the respondents said that;

"We should not rely only on government but also try to resolve our problems. In our village, we have constructed the boundary wall of our graveyard, improved our drain system and organised a welfare committee which provide free education to the deserving children".

Another respondent said that;

"I always try to get engage people and draw their attention towards the community issues. I have started a private clinic with the help of my foreign friends to provide free medical facilities to the poor".

In the same way another respondent said that;

"A few years back, when I was leaving for Australia, our village was facing severe problem of sanitation and this situation became more worse when I returned from Australia two years. Unfortunately, our political leadership only visit their constituencies during election. Once they got elected, they don't even bother. With the help of elders of the community, I tried to draw attention of the concerned authorities on bad sanitation conditions of our village but unfortunately there was no one to help us in this regard. Therefore, I organized a meeting of some key persons of the community and discussed the issue with them and we started improving sanitation system of our village by raising funds from the community".

Similarly, another respondent said that;

"I went to UK in 2007 and spent almost fifteen years in different countries. When I returned, I realised that it's time to pay back to my people as a lot of children were out of school. During my stay in abroad, I realised the importance of education. Therefore, I started a private school and asked other people who are abroad for help. Currently, this school is providing free education to 150 poor children".

In the same way another respondent said;

I went to Spain in 2005 when I was just nineteen years. When first time came back to Pakistan after three years, my father was suffering from fever, and it was my first experience to visit any public hospital. At that time, I realised that public hospitals are very pathetic, and my elder brother suggested me to visit some private clinic. I went a private clinic and they charged one thousand as examination fee that made me to think that it's a huge amount for a poor person/daily wager who earns one three hundred per day. I travelled to Spain again with a mind set to do something for the poor. I shared everything with my other Pakistani friends who were residing Spain and asked for help to build a hospital in our village. With the help of all friends, I have built a hospital for the poor people of my village".

Another respondent said that;

"I always cooperate with community development programs either started by Govt NGO or by the community. Recently, I have participated in a program which was initiated by some of my friends to improve the sanitation of the village and frankly speaking, I have learned to serve people from abroad".

Similarly, another respondent said that;

"I went to United Kingdom in 2008 for studies and stayed there for almost five years. When I came back for the first time, I realised that there were some families who don't have proper source of income and they were living very pathetic life. It was the moment when I decided to do something for these people, and I discussed with my friends who were also living abroad. We decided to help these people financially and from the last fourteen years we are providing grocery to the poor families and bearing the educational expense of their children".

Another respondent said that;

"I am in Australia from last eight years, but I don't want to detach myself from my family and hometown. I always want to do something for the betterment in my capacity. During my student time, I have seen many talented students who could not continue their education due to financial constraints. Currently, I am bearing the educational expanse of five orphan student who are studying at university level. I also try to provide medical facilities to the deserving persons".

Similarly, another respondent said that;

"My two sons are living abroad, one of them is living in France and the other is in USA. Whenever they send me money, they asked me to help poor. Moreover, I am member of Masjid committee (Masque committee) which not only looks the financial matters of masque but also try to provide financial support to deserving persons".

Another respondent said;

"I have spent twelve years in different countries including America, Australia and France and observed that in most of the Western societies have social protection system for their citizens but unfortunately, in our country people are poorer and there is no such mechanism for such people. A vast majority of people living below the poverty line. People don't have access to basic facilities like health and education. Therefore, I think it's our moral responsibility to help these poor especially those who are living in our surrounding or community. In our village, we have started a hospital which is free medical facilities to the deserving persons".

The findings of the study show that migrants and their family members were participating in community development program. They got awareness through their stay in different parts of the world or through their family members who were migrated internationally. It was observed that they were seriously concerned about the betterment of their village and welfare of its residents. They were contributing financially in many ways including providing groceries, bearing educational expense, and providing medical facilities to the poor.

Furthermore, they have improved the sanitation system of their village. Moreover, they were also participating in different community development programs started by the community itself or government or non-government organization. Overall, it was concluded that the level of civic engagement has been improved in the study area and social remittances have profound positive impact on social civic engagement.

9. Social Remittances and Political Civic Engagement

People cast their vote to express their preference for a candidate or party over the other and consider it as national duty to participate in electoral process. In the Western democracies, people vote according to the competency and manifesto of political party but in Pakistan, due to illiteracy people are not much aware about politics. They mostly inclined toward a political party through party slogan and vote accordingly. There are several factors that influence the political behaviour of the voters. Most of the people vote for the candidate due biradrism (means tribe). The biradrism factor is more crucial in the rural areas. Religious affiliation and economic status of the people are the other main determinants of the voting behaviour (Shawar & Asim, 2012). In the present study,

an effort is made to explore the impact of social remittances on political civic engagement. Here political civic engagement is measure through the knowledge and importance of vote and participation and invest in electoral activities.

10. Knowledge and Importance of Vote

I consider the knowledge and importance of vote as the first dimension or indicator of the political civic engagement. Through this, I have tried to explore the impact of migration in creating awareness regarding the importance of vote or electoral process among the migrants and their family members. For instance, how political remittances by migrants can affect their family members and lead to political civic engagement. To meet these objectives, the informants were asked question regarding their knowledge and importance of vote before and after their migration or the migration of their family members. In response to these questions, one of the respondents said that;

"After spending ten years in Europe, I have realised that it is our moral responsibility to participate in the political activities because it is very sensitive matter, and the future of our children is decided by elected members"

Similarly, another respondent said that;

"Every individual should show serious concern in politics that's what I learned from my overseas experience. If the people will not take it seriously, then the incompetent individuals will get elected and they will become a serious threat for the development of our society. We should be very careful while selecting our representative".

Another respondent said;

"I think every one of us is equally responsible for what's happening in our country. If we elect competent people, they can be asset for our country. On contrary, if we elect incompetent people, they will destroy our country. Therefore, I think voting process is very important and every one of us should be aware of it".

Similarly, another respondent said that;

"Before going to United States, I have casted my vote two times and I have just followed my elder family members. I don't have that much know how and was not even interested about it but after migration, I have learned that electoral process is very sensitive matter and before going for vote, we must know about the suitable candidate".

Another respondent said that;

"I think it is very sad that every one of us vote on family basis. We even don't the person whom we vote, is a suitable candidate or not. Most of our parliament members get elected every time but they never spoke in the parliament or even don't know what their responsibilities are. Therefore, we must be very careful while voting for any candidate".

Similarly, another respondent said that;

"Voting is our national responsibility being citizen of the country and we should fulfil it with carefully and honestly. We must know the importance of vote. All the parliament members are elected through our vote, and they represent us in the parliament. Before migration I was not aware from it but after migration, I have observed the Western democracies and realize the importance of vote".

In the same way, another respondent said that;

"If I had not been abroad, I might have not been aware about the importance of vote. I spent almost ten years in Australia and after getting its citizenship, I have voted and its compulsory to vote in Australia but unfortunately, in Pakistan a vast majority of people don't and those who vote, majority of them don't know the importance and sensitivity of their vote".

Findings of the study suggest that most of migrants were not interested in their national politics before migration. After migration, they encounter different political systems especially in the Western democracies through which they acquire political knowledge. They share their knowledge whenever they contact with their family members or friends, either by paying visit or by telephone calls, and compare it with the political system of their source country. This comparison increases political knowledge and importance of vote among migrants' family members and other close members in their connection. They realised that their vote is their national responsibility, and it can change their future if they use it wisely. These findings of the study relate with (Chauvet et al., 2016). They concluded in their study that migrants remain connected with their family members and friends and this cross-border connection affect the political awareness through sever potential ways. Generally, it occurs when migrants share their knowledge about politics which they acquired through international migration with non-migrant members.

Furthermore, the migrants were more concerned about their families who left behind and they want to change their life and, they want to change their source country. Moreover, I found that families with migrants' members were interested in politics and were very critical about the selection of candidate and electoral process.

11. Investment and Participation in Political Activities

Investment and participation in political activities is the second indicator to measure the level of political civic engagement. Do the migrants exposure to different countries affect their level of participation in the political activities in the source area. Furthermore, do they transfer their political knowledge to their family members and friends left behind. To explore these dimension, different questions were asked from the informants. When I asked from one of the informants that do you participate in political activities, if yes; then how? Moreover, I asked do you invest money directly or indirectly to facilitate or making efficient the electoral process? Responding to my questions he said;

"If I have not been to United States, I have never realised the importance of my vote. I never took interest in any political activity before going to abroad. Now, I feel its national duty of every citizen to actively participate in political process of the country. During last two elections, I went for campaign and on the election day, I provided transport facilities to the voters".

Similarly, another respondent said that;

"Traditionally, our people vote according to family basis or on the direction of rich members of community. They don't know the importance of their vote and I think that's the reason most of our parliament members are incompetent. I can name so many national assembly members who are getting elected again and again from the same constituencies, but they never spoke on parliament floor. During my stay in United Kingdom, I have realised the importance of democratic process. In the last general election, I went for election campaign and tried to create awareness of vote among people".

Another respondent said that;

"Literacy rate in our country is very low and almost one fourth population is living below the poverty line. People don't know the importance of their votes. Therefore, I think it's our responsibility to actively participate in political activities. In the last two elections, I have not only participated in door-to-door election campaign but also polling agent at our polling station".

Another respondent said that;

"I was not aware about the importance of vote and consider it as formality before going for higher studies in abroad. My stay in abroad provided me exposure and knowledge regarding the importance of democratic process. In 2013 election I could not come back but I motivate my dad

to actively participate in electoral activities and in last election I was here, and I organized a political rally to raise awareness among people. Moreover, on election day I tried to ensure maximum participation of people in the election".

Another respondent said that;

"My family actively participates in electoral process. We organise political rally and contribute to party funds. Last union council chairman was from our family, and this was only due to the motivation and support of my elder son who is living in abroad. According to him politics is one of the best and noble way to serve people".

Findings of the study suggest that migrants were very keen about their source area's politics. They were actively participating as a voter, supporter, or organizer of political debate in their source country's local or national elections. The enduring ties of migrants with their families and friends in their source area made them visible actors in the political process of their hometown. The finding of the study relates with (Córdova & Hiskey, 2015; O'Mahony, 2013) in which it has been concluded that migrant's close ties in the source countries influence the political process of source countries. On contrary, Pérez-Armendáriz and Crow (2010) found that having lived in abroad makes migrants more critical towards their source country's government, but their political participation level was not distinguishable from those who never migrated.

Furthermore, findings of the study suggest that the level of participation and investment in political activities has been significantly improved due to migration. The exposure to new culture in destination countries shape the behaviour of migrants and they try to incorporate these acquired norms in the political system of their source area. Significant change has been observed in political decision and voting behaviour. Generally, in Pakistan, people cast their vote on base of family affiliation, religious affiliation or under the influence of rich people of the area. People were actively participating electoral activities. These findings relate with the study conducted by Chauvet and Mercier (2014) in Mali to explore the link between migration and political outcomes. They found that localities with higher rate of migrants were more actively involved in electoral process.

Overall, it was concluded that social remittances have profound impact on political process of the area. Findings of the study relate with (Mahmoud et al., 2013; Pfutze, 2012); they concluded that political norms and ideas acquired by migrants from their destination countries have positive impact on the source area.

12. Conclusion

The process of social change is multifaceted and cannot be instigated by an individual or by a group of individuals. However, the place of individual actor in the process of social change is incredibly important in accelerating and impeding this process. The members of migrants' families were actively involved in the village's matters and were willing to take part in the process of transformation. The unique competence of knowledge and skills of migrant members was seen through the level of awareness and participation in political activities and other community welfare programs.

It was observed that migrants maintain their relationships with those who left behind. They show their concern about their families and try to influence in different ways. The frequent contact between migrants and their left behind relatives depicts that they care about their relatives and development process of their hometown. For instance, the frequent contact between son and his left behind parents suggest the strong bond between them and the community which they were living. On the one hand, this communication shows that migrants concern about the well-being of those who left behind while on the other hand it serves as a channel of transformation of

remittances. Migrants serve as agents for the diffusion of norms and practices which they acquired from their host countries especially from the established democracies.

Furthermore, substantial evidence found that migrants were getting exposure from their destination countries and were remitting back to their hometown. The compelling evidence from informants show that migrants stay in abroad has improved their knowledge about politics and voting process that ultimately leads to political social engagement. The migrants were not only themselves but also their families and other member of their network were actively involved in political activities. They were more civically engaged and contributing to social change in the study area.

It was concluded that social remittances have profound positive impact on social change, and it has become a symbol of continued change in terms of modernization and urbanization in the modern era. This process indicates the adoption of modern values and indicate a wide range of structural changes including breaking the shackles of caste system, gender roles, traditional occupation and other norms and values.

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