

Migration and Differential Patterns of Patriarchy: Contours of Female Labour Force Participation in Karachi

Natasha Ansari and Asad Sayeed

Collective for Social Science Research

Low Labour Force Participation in Urban Areas-across South Asia and in Pakistan

- ILO reports that Female Labour Force Participation in South Asia has reduced between 1991 and 2015.
- Pakistan Lags behind Bangladesh and India in Aggregate as well as urban LFP for women
- Important Issue for Economic as well as Social Policy

Patterns of Patriarchy and Migration

- Conventional explanations of Low Female LFP are in the realm of Human Capital Constraints, Urban Transport, Labour Market Discrimination and the Double Burden of Women's Labour
- In addition, our vantage point is differential nature of patriarchy across ethnicities and its link with migration (particularly its vintage).

International Literature

- The 'U' curve - gradual reduction of women's employment in traditional sectors (eg. agriculture) – leads to participation decline in early stages of economic development
 - Wealth effect
 - Proximity and separation of work and home
 - Rigid work week hours (reproductive labour not accounted)
- Vintage of ethnicity and related community norms utilized as analytical lens is limited

Local Literature

- Same time spent on un-paid reproductive labour for working married women and those not working (TUS 2007)
- LFS (2018) reasons for migration – men “for work” and women “for marriage” (58%) with spouse (18%)
- Women’s socially constituted role places high value on seclusion as a social marker (Gazdar and Mallah, 2011).
 - Working outside the home is an activity that would diminish the reputation of social groups
- The comparatively lower urban LFP figure could indicate a tense relationship with urbanization—resurgent patriarchy? (Sayeed et al. 2016)

Research Questions

- How does Urban Migration Impact Agency and Mobility Across Ethnic Groups?

Relatedly, how does vintage of migration alter behaviour?

- How do Structures of Patriarchy Differ across Ethnic Groups and whether the pace of change is different Across groups.

Sites of Research in Karachi

- Lyari
 - Old Settled Community.
 - Baloch and Katchi Communities
 - Impacted by Violence Recently
- Baldia
 - Predominantly Pakhtun
 - Large Number of New Migrants (mostly IDPs)

Sites of Research in Karachi

- Korangi
 - Mixed Ethnicity: Begali, Sindhi, Punjabi/Seraiki and Urdu Speaking
 - In the Vicinity of an Industrial Area

Methodology

- Qualitative Approach
- 30 female Key-informant Interviews
 - 10 at each site
- 3 Female Focus Groups
 - 1 at each site
- 3 Male Key-informant Interviews
 - 1 at each site

Lyari: Old Settlement, Least Patriarchal

- In aggregate, highest level of LFP amongst women
- High level of literacy amongst women, linked to better supply of schools and colleges
- Employment mostly in health and education
- Suffer from Labour Market Discrimination in the rest of the city
- Strong Sense of Community and relatively congenial public space

Lyari: Old Settlement, Least Patriarchal

- Across the two communities, Baloch were less patriarchal
- Katchi women were less mobile. Worked more out of necessity.
- Fears of 'clan pollution' prevalent amongst men and elders
- Greater Degree of positive impulse to work amongst Baloch; enhances 'shoor' according to respondents

Baldia: Most Patriarchal, old and new Migrant Tensions

- Very Little remunerative employment amongst women and virtually no home based work either
- Few who worked, were the most destitute
- Trend in Education for girls improving but still restricted to primary and some secondary schooling
- Sense of Community but highly male dominated

Baldia: Most Patriarchal, old and new Migrant Tensions

- Old Migrants vary of new migrants
- Notion of 'clan pollution' prevalent across both
- Variations in attitudes across Kinship Groups also – Buneris and Yousufzais less rigid. Mehsuds, Afghan and Swatis more so

Korangi: Harassment, Fears of Clan Pollution yet dynamism

- Ethnic heterogeneity and different vintages of migration have meant sense of community is weak
- Harassment for women and petty crime are important deterrents for women's mobility and LFP
- Yet, work in the informal sector, education and in factories more prevalent.

Korangi: Harassment, Fears of Clan Pollution yet dynamism

- Instances of inter-ethnic marriages but that is what elicits fear amongst men
- Post Marriage restrictions on work very common
- Real fear of women with mobile phones and linked to paid work

Conclusions

- Lyari and Korangi adhere, in varying degrees, with the U curve hypothesis
- Weak relationship with Pakhtun Women in Baldia
- The notion of clan pollution as an instrument of patriarchy and a hurdle to LFP is the most salient finding of the study
- Education as a potential booster – inculcates importance of ‘shoor’
- Different patterns of public space and the notion of respectability attached to them

Policy Questions for Discussion

- Differentiated and Context-specific social policy?
 - Education in Baldia
 - Anti-discriminatory campaigns in Lyari
 - Public Space issues in Korangi
- Implications for transport policy?
- Implications for harassment legislation?
- Implications for care work?
- How can public space be made friendlier for women?
 - For safety in Korangi?
 - For access with regards to surveillance in Baldia?