

The Impact of Migration on Early Marriage in Punjab, Pakistan

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Abstract

Early marriages are a significant concern in developing countries, impacting society through limited economic opportunities, health complications, and increased vulnerability to domestic violence. This study examines whether the external migration of a household member reduces the likelihood of early marriage for female children in Punjab, Pakistan. Migration may alleviate economic pressures or exacerbate the problem, as indicated by the MICS dataset (2011, 2014 and 2018) for Punjab, Pakistan. We addressed the endogeneity of the migration decision approach by utilizing the instrumental variable approach. We use a triple interaction variable that comprise of historic migration rates, night time light intensity of the migrant destination countries and number of adult males in migrant sending households to generate an instrument highly correlated with the migration decision but uncorrelated with the female's marriage decision directly. Overall, we find that migration has a significant impact on early marriage; however, their examination of subgroups have yielded mixed results.

Keywords: External Migration, Early Marriage, Caregiver, Instrumental Variable.