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Impact of the migration profile on quality of life of elderly parents of migrated children in Punjab

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Abstract

Migration of adult children and population ageing has significantly altered family structures and intergenerational relationships in Punjab, where large-scale migration has increased the number of elderly parents living without their children. The present study examined the migration profile of adult children, the support provided to elderly parents, and the association between migration related factors and the quality of life of empty-nest and semi-empty-nest elderly. The study was conducted in the Doaba, Majha and Malwa regions of Punjab, covering rural and urban areas. A total of 240 elderly respondents aged 60 years and above, each having at least one migrated child, were selected using the snowball sampling technique. Data were collected through a structured interview schedule, and quality of life was assessed using the World Health Organization Quality of Life-BREF instrument. Frequencies, percentages and the Chi-square test were used for data analysis. The findings revealed that most migrated children were married, employed and had migrated internationally or to other parts of India, primarily for family settlement, better livelihood opportunities and improved living conditions. Regular communication through audio and video calls was common, although face-to-face interaction was limited. Migration involved considerable financial investment, and many families incurred loans to finance migration. Remittances and gifts from migrated children constituted important forms of support and were mainly utilized for house construction and improvement, debt repayment, healthcare, savings and household expenses. Semi-empty-nest elderly reported greater family support than empty-nest elderly, and several migration-related factors, particularly communication repayment of migration-related expenses, remittances and gifts, were significantly associated with one or more domains of quality of life. The study concludes that although migration improves the economic well-being of families, sustained emotional contact and continued financial support from migrated children remain essential for enhancing the quality of life of elderly parents left behind.

Keywords: Migration, Empty-Nest Elderly, Semi-Empty-Nest Elderly, Quality of Life, Intergenerational Support, Punjab

1. Introduction

Population ageing and migration are two major demographic processes that are reshaping family structures and intergenerational relationships in India. With increasing life expectancy and declining fertility, the proportion of older adults is rising rapidly According to the United Nations Population Fund 2023 ^[1], nearly one-fifth of India's population will be aged 60 years and above by 2050. At the same time, increasing internal and international migration of young adults, particularly from Punjab, has resulted in many elderly parents being left behind, altering traditional family support systems. Migration can improve the economic wellbeing of elderly households through remittances, which help meet healthcare, food and other household expenses. Evidence from the Longitudinal Ageing Study in India shows that financial support from children is an important determinant of the quality of life of older adults (International Institute for Population Sciences and Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health 2020) ^[2] Similarly, Mandal and Paul (2024) ^[3] reported that remittances from migrant children reduce the financial vulnerability of elderly parents. However, migration also reduces face-to-face interaction and may weaken emotional and social support, making regular communication and family connectedness important for the well-being of older adults Dakua *et al* 2023 ^[4] and International Institute for Population Sciences and Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health 2020 ^[2]. Although previous studies have examined the effects of migration on the health and well-being of left-behind elderly, limited attention has been given to the migration profile of adult children, communication patterns, remittances, migration-related debt, and support provided to elderly parents. Comparative evidence on empty-nest and semi-empty-nest elderly in high-migration states such as Punjab is also limited. Therefore, the present study was undertaken to examine the migration profile of

adult children, assess living arrangements, parent-child interaction, remittances and support provided by migrated children, and analyse their association with the quality of life of empty-nest and semi-empty-nest elderly in Punjab.

2. Objectives

- To examine the migration profile of adult children of elderly parents in Punjab.
- To assess living arrangements, parent-child interaction, remittances and support provided by migrated children.
- To analyse the association between migration-related characteristics and the quality of life of empty-nest and semi-empty-nest elderly

3. Materials and Methods

A descriptive and comparative research design was adopted for the study. The study was conducted in the three socio-cultural zones of Punjab (Doaba, Majha and Malwa), covering both rural and urban areas. The study population comprised elderly individuals aged 60 years and above having at least one migrated child residing either within India or abroad. A total of 240 respondents were selected using the snowball sampling

technique. The sample was equally distributed across the three zones (80 respondents per zone), with equal representation from rural and urban areas, empty-nest and semi-empty-nest households, and respondents whose children had migrated within India and internationally. The selected districts were Hoshiarpur and Jalandhar (Doaba), Gurdaspur and Amritsar (Majha), and Moga and Ludhiana (Malwa). Primary data were collected through personal interviews using a structured and pre-tested interview schedule. Information was obtained on the migration profile of adult children, including migration destination, occupation, migration-related expenses, remittances, communication, visits, and financial, emotional and social support provided to elderly parents. Quality of life was assessed using the WHOQOL-BREF instrument, covering the physical, psychological, social and environmental domains. Prior informed consent was obtained from all respondents, and confidentiality was maintained throughout the study. The collected data were coded and analysed using frequencies, percentages and the Chi-square test to examine the association between migration-related variables and the quality of life of elderly respondents.

4. Results

Table 1: Profile of migrated children of empty nest and semi-empty nest elderly n=418

Characteristics		Empty Nest (n1= 234)	Semi-Empty Nest (n2= 184)	Total
Gender	Male	125 (53.42)	95 (51.63)	220 (52.63)
	Female	109 (46.58)	89 (48.37)	198 (47.37)
Marital Status	Married	169 (72.22)	155 (84.23)	324 (77.51)
	Unmarried	65 (27.78)	29 (15.76)	94 (22.49)
Location	Within district	0 (0.00)	4 (2.17)	4 (0.96)
	Within state	94 (40.17)	64 (34.78)	158 (37.80)
	Outside the state	28 (11.97)	32 (17.39)	60 (14.35)
	International	112 (47.86)	84 (45.65)	196 (46.89)
Period of migration	2008-2011	19 (8.12)	20 (10.87)	39 (9.33)
	2012-2015	46 (19.66)	46 (25.00)	92 (22.01)
	2016-2019	95 (40.60)	76 (41.30)	171 (40.91)
	2020-2023	74 (31.62)	42 (22.83)	116 (27.75)
Reason of migration	Study	19 (8.12)	11 (5.98)	30 (7.18)
	Earning	26 (11.11)	39 (21.20)	65 (15.55)
	Family Settlement	138 (58.97)	100 (54.35)	238 (56.94)
	Better lifestyle	51 (21.79)	34 (18.48)	85 (20.33)
Occupation	Job	167 (71.37)	127 (69.02)	294 (70.33)
	Business	5 (2.14)	12 (6.52)	17 (4.07)
	Labour	0 (0.00)	4 (2.17)	4 (0.96)
	Student	24 (10.26)	9 (4.89)	33 (7.90)
	Homemaker	38 (16.23)	32 (17.40)	70 (16.75)
Monthly income (Rs)	No income	60 (25.64)	42 (22.83)	102 (24.40)
	40,000-2,04,999	110 (47.01)	96 (52.17)	206 (49.28)
	2,05,000-3,69,999	53 (22.65)	43 (23.37)	96 (22.97)
	>3,70,000	11 (4.70)	3 (1.63)	14 (3.34)
Time elapsed since last visit of migrated children	1-6 month	10 (4.27)	7 (3.80)	17 (4.07)
	>12 month	65 (27.77)	52 (28.26)	117 (28.00)
	>3	26 (11.11)	51 (27.72)	77 (18.42)
	>6 years	46 (19.65)	23 (12.50)	69 (16.51)
	Never returned	87 (37.20)	51 (27.72)	138 (33.01)
Frequency of visit by respondent to migrated children	1-6 month	0 (0.00)	3 (1.63)	3 (0.72)
	>12 month	37 (15.81)	40 (21.67)	77 (18.42)
	>3	14 (5.98)	11 (5.97)	25 (5.98)
	>6 years	29 (12.40)	7 (3.80)	36 (8.61)
	Never visited	154 (65.81)	123 (66.84)	277 (66.27)

Profile of migrated children

Table presents the migration profile of 418 migrated children reported by 240 elderly respondents, comprising 234 children from empty-nest households and 184 from semi-empty-nest households. The gender distribution was nearly balanced, with 52.63 per cent males and 47.37 per cent females. Most migrated children (77.51%) were married, with a higher proportion among semiempty-nest households (84.23%) than empty-nest households (72.22%). International migration was the most common destination (46.89%), followed by migration within the state (37.80%) and to other states (14.35%), while migration within the same district was negligible (0.96%). The largest proportion of children (40.91%) migrated during 2016-2019, indicating an increasing migration trend over the last decade. Family settlement (56.94%) was the leading reason for migration, followed by better lifestyle (20.33%), earning

opportunities (15.55%) and higher studies (7.18%). Most migrated children (70.33%) were employed, whereas 16.75 per cent were homemakers and 7.90 per cent were students. Nearly half (49.28%) earned Rs 40,000-2,04,999 per month while 22.97 per cent earned Rs 2,05,000 - 3,69,999. About one-fourth (24.40%) had no independent income, mainly because they were students or homemakers. Face-to-face interaction between elderly parents and migrated children was limited. About onethird of the migrated children (33.01%) had never returned to their parental home after migration, and 66.27 per cent of elderly parents had never visited their migrated children. Overall, the findings indicate that migration among children of elderly parents in Punjab is predominantly international and driven by family settlement and employment, with limited physical interaction between parents and migrated children.

Table 2: Comparison of empty nest and semi-empty nest elderly according to living arrangement and connection with migrated children n= 240

Parameters		Empty nest (n1 = 120)	Semi-Empty nest (n2 = 120)	Total
No. of migrated children per household	1 child	28 (23.33)	66 (55.00)	94 (39.17)
	2 children	72 (60.00)	44 (36.67)	116 (48.33)
	3 children	18 (15.00)	10 (8.33)	28 (11.67)
	4 children	2 (1.67)	0 (0.00)	2 (0.83)
Living arrangements*	Spouse	101 (84.17)	97 (80.83)	198 (82.50)
	Other children	0 (0.00)	120 (100.00)	120 (50.00)
	Daughter-in-law & grandchildren	17 (14.17)	84 (70.00)	101 (42.08)
	Parents (mother/father)	4 (3.33)	21 (17.50)	25 (10.42)
	Brother's family	7 (5.83)	24 (20.00)	31 (12.92)
	Caretaker	29 (24.17)	10 (8.33)	39 (16.25)
	No one	4 (3.33)	0 (0.00)	4 (1.67)
Mode of talk	Audio call	23 (19.17)	22 (18.33)	45 (18.75)
	Video call	5 (4.17)	2 (1.67)	7 (2.92)
	Both	92 (76.67)	96 (80.00)	188 (78.33)
Frequency of talk	Almost daily	10 (8.33)	10 (8.33)	20 (8.33)
	Weekly	99 (82.50)	94 (78.33)	193 (80.42)
	Monthly	11 (9.17)	16 (13.33)	27 (11.25)

Comparison of Empty-Nest and Semi-Empty-Nest Elderly According to Living Arrangement and Connection with Migrated Children

Table compares empty-nest and semi-empty-nest elderly with respect to the number of migrated children, living arrangements and communication with their migrated children. Nearly half of the respondents (48.33%) had two migrated children, while 39.17 per cent had one migrated child. Among empty-nest elderly, the majority (60.00%) had two migrated children, whereas most semi-empty-nest elderly (55.00%) had one migrated child. Most respondents (82.50%) were living with their spouse. All semiempty-nest elderly lived with at least one

non-migrated child, and 70.00 per cent also lived with their daughter-in-law and grandchildren, compared with 14.17 per cent of empty-nest elderly. Caretaker support was more common among empty-nest elderly (24.17%) than semi-empty-nest elderly (8.33%), while 3.33 per cent of empty-nest elderly lived alone. Communication with migrated children was mainly maintained through both audio and video calls (78.33%), followed by audio calls only (18.75%). Weekly communication was the most common pattern (80.42%), whereas daily and monthly communication were reported by 8.33 per cent and 11.25 per cent of respondents, respectively.

Table 3: Comparison of migration expenses and remittances by migrated children between empty nest and semi empty nest n= 240

Migration expenses & Remittance				Empty Nest (n=120)	Semi-Empty Nest (n2=)	Total	
Debt taken for migration				Yes	76 (63.33)	75 (62.50)	151 (62.92)
				No	44 (36.67)	45 (37.50)	89 (37.08)
Expenses (Rs)	on	migration	No money spent	19 (15.83)	27 (22.50)	47 (19.58)	
			80,000-10,59,999	27 (22.50)	44 (36.67)	70 (29.17)	
			10,60,000-20,39,999	51 (42.50)	40 (33.33)	91 (37.92)	
			>20,40,000	23(19.16)	9(7.50)	32(13.33)	
Repayment of borrowed amount by children				Fully	44 (36.67)	59 (49.17)	103 (42.92)

			Partially	60 (50.00)	49 (40.83)	101 (42.08)
			No	16 (13.33)	12 (10.00)	28 (11.67)
Remittances received			Yes	91 (75.83)	111 (92.50)	202 (84.17)
			No	29 (24.17)	9 (7.50)	38 (15.83)
Frequency of remittances			Monthly	43 (35.83)	59 (49.17)	102 (42.50)
			Six monthly	13 (10.83)	18 (15.00)	31 (12.92)
			Yearly	7 (5.83)	5 (4.17)	12 (5.00)
			Special occasions / Emergencies	27 (22.50)	22 (18.33)	49 (20.42)
			Only on request	29 (24.17)	17 (14.17)	46 (19.17)
Gifts children	from	migrated	Yes	71 (59.17)	80 (66.67)	151 (62.92)
			No	49 (40.83)	40 (33.33)	89 (37.08)
			Everyday consumption	24 (20.00)	34 (28.33)	58 (24.17)
			Education	11 (9.17)	38 (31.67)	49 (20.42)
			Health & medicine	62 (51.67)	90 (75.00)	152 (63.33)
			Pay off debts & loans	70 (58.33)	89 (74.17)	159 (66.25)
*Use of remittances	Construction & home development	78 (65.00)	94 (78.33)	172 (71.67)		
	Savings in bank	60 (50.00)	65 (54.17)	125 (52.08)		
	Purchase of jewellery	56 (46.67)	56 (46.67)	112 (46.67)		
	Purchase of transport / agriculture equipment's	41 (34.17)	55 (45.83)	96 (40.00)		
	Purchase of l and	10 (8.33)	3 (2.50)	13 (5.42)		
	Purchase of household goods	26 (21.67)	29 (24.17)	55 (22.92)		
	Bills	30 (25.00)	28 (23.33)	58 (24.17)		
	Others	6 (5.00)	2 (1.67)	8 (3.33)		

Multiple response

Comparison of Migration Expenses and Remittances Received from Migrated Children between Empty-Nest and Semi Empty-Nest Elderly

Table compares migration expenses, remittances and their utilization between empty-nest and semi-empty-nest elderly households. More than three-fifths of the respondents (62.92%) had taken loans to finance their children's migration. The largest proportion (37.92%) incurred migration expenses ranging from Rs 10,60,000 to Rs 20,39,999, with higher expenditure reported among empty-nest households. Expenditure exceeding Rs 20,40,000 was also more common among empty-nest households (19.17%) than semi-empty-nest households (7.50%). Regarding repayment of migration-related debt, 42.92 per cent of respondents reported full repayment by their children, while 42.08 per cent reported partial repayment, with

full repayment being more common among semi-empty-nest households (49.17%). Most respondents (84.17%) received remittances from their migrated children, with a higher proportion among semi-empty-nest households (92.50%) than empty-nest households (75.83%). Monthly remittances were the most common pattern (42.50%), whereas remittances sent on request were more frequently reported by empty-nest households (24.17%). Nearly two-thirds of the respondents (62.92%) received gifts from their migrated children. Remittances were mainly utilized for house construction and improvement (71.67%), repayment of debts (66.25%) and healthcare expenses (63.33%), while healthcare and education expenditure was reported more frequently among semi-empty-nest households.

Table 4: Association between migration-related variables and quality of life among elderly n= 240

Migration characteristics	Domain	Categories	Low	Moderate	High	χ^2
Gender of migrants	Physical	Male	14 (8.80)	115 (71.90)	31 (19.40)	6.10*
		Female	16 (20.00)	50 (62.50)	14 (17.50)	
	Environmental	Male	12 (7.50)	112 (70.0)	36 (22.50)	16.00**
		Female	20 (25.00)	52 (65.0)	8 (10.00)	
Marital status of migrants	Physical	Married	12 (8.20)	105 (71.90)	29 (19.90)	7.10*

			Unmarried	18 (19.10)	55 (58.50)	21 (22.30)	
			Married	14 (9.60)	104 (71.20)	28 (19.20)	
		Psychological	Unmarried	20 (21.30)	59 (62.80)	15 (16.00)	6.42*
			Married	10 (6.80)	93 (63.70)	43 (29.50)	
		Social	Unmarried	18 (19.10)	61 (64.90)	15 (16.00)	11.76**
			Married	11 (7.50)	106 (72.60)	29 (19.90)	
		Environmental	Unmarried	21 (22.30)	59 (62.80)	14 (14.90)	10.06**
			Married	11 (7.50)	106 (72.60)	29 (19.90)	
Frequency of talk		Psychological	Almost daily	1 (5.0)	14 (70.0)	5 (25.0)	10.92*
			Weekly	28 (14.5)	122 (63.2)	43 (22.3)	
			Monthly	6 (22.2)	20 (74.0)	1 (3.8)	
		Environmental	Almost daily	1 (5.0)	12 (60.0)	7 (35.0)	14.26**
			Weekly	25 (12.9)	120 (62.2)	48 (24.9)	
			Monthly	1 (3.7)	12 (44.5)	14 (51.8)	
Repayment of borrowed amou by children		Physical	Fully Paid	8 (7.8)	70(68.0)	25 (24.3)	22.30**
			Partially Paid	24 (22.0)	68 (62.39)	17(15.60)	
			Not Paid	12 (42.9)	12 (42.9)	4 (14.2)	
		Psychological	Fully Paid	5 (4.9)	70 (68.0)	28 (27.1)	27.67**
			Partially Paid	20 (18.3)	70 (64.2)	19 (17.5)	
			Not Paid	12 (42.9)	10 (35.7)	6 (21.4)	
		Social	Fully Paid	6 (5.8)	65 (63.1)	32 (31.1)	26.11**
			Partially Paid	25 (22.94)	64 (58.72)	20 (18.35)	
			Not Paid	12 (42.90)	11(39.29)	5 (17.86)	
		Environmental	Fully Paid	5 (4.85)	72 (69.90)	26(25.24)	19.84**
			Partially Paid	18 (16.5)	70 (64.2)	21 (19.3)	
			Not Paid	10 (35.7)	14 (50.0)	4 (14.3)	
		Overall QOL	Fully Paid	6 (5.8)	67 (65.0)	30 (29.1)	21.50**
			Partially Paid	22 (20.2)	66 (60.6)	21 (19.3)	
			Not Paid	11 (39.3)	12 (42.9)	5 (17.9)	
Frequency of remittances		Social	Monthly	5 (4.9)	56 (54.9)	41 (40.2)	1/96*
			Six monthly	4 (12.9)	18 (58.1)	9 (29.0)	
			Yearly	3 (25.0)	5 (41.7)		
Gifts from migrated children		Physical	Yes	15 (9.9)	110 (72.8)	26 (17.2) 17.51**	
			No	20 (22.5)	41 (46.1)	28 (31.4)	
		Psychological	Yes	12 (7.9)	108 (71.5)	31 (20.5) 17.74**	
			No	23 (25.8)	43 (48.3)	23 (25.8)	
		Social	Yes	10 (6.6)	100 (66.2)	41 (27.2) 14.94**	
			No	20 (22.5)	42 (47.2)	27 (30.3)	
		Environmental	Yes	11 (7.3)	102 (67.5)	38 (25.2) 15.00**	
			No	22 (24.7)	45 (50.6)	22 (24.7)	

Significant at 0.01 level

Significant at 0.05 level

Association between Migration-related Variables and Quality of Life among Elderly

Table presents the association between selected migration-related variables and the physical, psychological, social and

environmental domains of quality of life among elderly respondents. Gender of migrated children was significantly associated with the physical ($\chi^2=6.18$, $p<0.05$) and environmental ($\chi^2=16.99$, $p<0.01$) domains. Marital status of migrated children showed significant associations with all four

domains: physical ($\chi^2=7.18$, $p<0.05$), psychological ($\chi^2=6.43$, $p<0.05$), social ($\chi^2=11.76$, $p<0.01$) and environmental ($\chi^2=10.96$, $p<0.01$). Frequency of communication with migrated children was significantly associated with the psychological ($\chi^2=10.92$, $p<0.05$) and environmental ($\chi^2=14.26$, $p<0.01$) domains. Repayment of migration-related expenses by children showed highly significant associations with all domains of quality of life: physical ($\chi^2=22.30$, $p<0.01$), psychological ($\chi^2=27.67$, $p<0.01$), social ($\chi^2=26.11$, $p<0.01$) and environmental ($\chi^2=19.84$, $p<0.01$). Frequency of remittances was significantly associated only with the social domain ($\chi^2=17.96$, $p<0.05$). Receiving gifts from migrated children was significantly associated with all domains of quality of life, including physical ($\chi^2=17.51$, $p<0.01$), psychological ($\chi^2=17.74$, $p<0.01$), social ($\chi^2=14.94$, $p<0.01$) and environmental ($\chi^2=15.00$, $p<0.01$).

$\chi^2=27.67$, $p<0.01$, social ($\chi^2=26.11$, $p<0.01$) and environmental ($\chi^2=19.84$, $p<0.01$). Frequency of remittances was significantly associated only with the social domain ($\chi^2=17.96$, $p<0.05$). Receiving gifts from migrated children was significantly associated with all domains of quality of life, including physical ($\chi^2=17.51$, $p<0.01$), psychological ($\chi^2=17.74$, $p<0.01$), social ($\chi^2=14.94$, $p<0.01$) and environmental ($\chi^2=15.00$, $p<0.01$).

Table 5: Association between migration-related variables and overall quality of life among elderly n= 240

Migration characteristics	Categories	Low	Moderate	High	χ^2
Marital status of migrants	Married	12 (8.20)	102 (69.90)	32 (21.90)	7.52*
	Unmarried	19 (20.2)	59 (62.80)	16 (17.00)	
Frequency of talk	Almost daily	1 (5.0)	13 (65.0)	6 (30.0)	12.66*
	Weekly	26 (13.5)	121 (62.7)	46 (23.8)	
	Monthly	4 (14.8)	18 (66.7)	5 (18.5)	
Repayment of borrowed amount by children	Fully Paid	6 (5.8)	67 (65.0)	30 (29.1)	21.50**
	Partially Paid	22 (20.2)	66 (60.6)	21 (19.3)	
	Not Paid	11 (39.3)	12 (42.9)	5 (17.9)	
Frequency of remittances	Monthly	6 (5.9)	62 (60.8)	34 (33.3)	14.85*
	Six monthly	5 (16.1)	19 (61.3)	7 (22.6)	
	Yearly	4 (33.3)	6 (50.0)	2 (16.7)	
	On special occasions or emergencies	8 (16.3)	31 (63.3)	10 (20.4)	
	Only on request	10 (21.73)	26 (56.52)	10 (21.73)	
Gifts from migrated children	Yes	12 (7.9)	105 (69.5)	34 (22.5)	14.82**
	No	21 (23.9)	43 (48.1)	25 (28.7)	

Significant at 0.01 level

Significant at 0.05 level

Table presents the association between selected migration-related variables and the overall quality of life of elderly respondents. Significant associations were observed for marital status of migrated children ($\chi^2=7.52$, $p<0.05$), frequency of communication with migrated children ($\chi^2=12.66$, $p<0.05$), repayment of migration-related expenses by children ($\chi^2=21.50$, $p<0.01$), frequency of remittances ($\chi^2=14.85$, $p<0.05$) and receiving gifts from migrated children ($\chi^2=14.82$, $p<0.01$). However, no significant association was found between the gender of migrated children and the overall quality of life of elderly respondents.

Association between Migration-related Variables and Overall Quality of Life among

5. Discussion

The present study highlights the important role of adult children's migration in shaping the quality of life of elderly parents in Punjab. The predominance of international migration, particularly in the Doaba region, reflects the state's long-established migration culture, while family settlement, better livelihood opportunities and improved living conditions emerged as the major drivers of migration. These findings are consistent with Pitoski *et al* (2021) [5] and Kaur *et al* (2021) [6], who identified economic aspirations and improved living standards as key determinants of migration. Migration influenced both the living arrangements and support systems of elderly parents. Semi-empty-nest elderly were more likely to live with other family members, whereas empty-nest elderly showed greater dependence on caretakers. Despite physical separation, regular communication through audio and video calls remained common, indicating that digital communication has become an important means of maintaining intergenerational relationships. Similar findings have been reported by Murugan *et al* (2022) [7], Kaur and Sinha (2023) [8]

and Wang *et al* (2021) [9], who found that frequent parent-child communication enhances social connectedness and psychological well-being among older adults. The study also demonstrates that migration has important economic implications for elderly households. Although migration often required substantial financial investment and borrowing, migrant children frequently supported repayment of migration-related expenses and provided regular remittances. In agreement with Sabharwal and Singh (2021) [10] and Mandal and Paul (2024) [3], remittances contributed to household welfare by supporting housing improvement, debt repayment, healthcare and other household needs. The findings further indicate that semi-empty-nest elderly generally received greater financial and family support than empty-nest elderly, suggesting that the presence of non-migrant family members provides additional emotional and practical assistance. Furthermore, migration-related factors such as marital status of migrated children, frequency of communication, repayment of migration-related expenses, remittances and receipt of gifts were significantly associated with one or more domains of quality of life. Elderly parents receiving regular emotional and financial support reported better quality of life, supporting the findings of Dakua *et al* (2023) [4], Lu *et al* (2023) [11] and Mandal and Paul (2024) [3]. Overall, the study demonstrates that migration has both beneficial and challenging consequences for elderly parents. While remittances strengthen household economic security, reduced face-to-face interaction may weaken traditional caregiving. The findings emphasise that sustained communication, continued financial support and strong family relationships are essential for improving the quality of life of elderly parents in migrant-sending regions of Punjab.

6. Conclusion

The study concludes that migration of adult children has both positive and challenging implications for the quality of life of elderly parents in Punjab. While migration improves household economic security through remittances and other forms of financial support, it also reduces opportunities for direct caregiving and face-to-face interaction. Regular communication through digital technologies has emerged as an important means of maintaining intergenerational relationships despite geographical separation. Semi-empty-nest elderly generally received greater family and financial support than empty-nest elderly, highlighting the protective role of co-residing family members. Furthermore, migration-related factors, particularly communication, repayment of migration-related expenses, remittances and gifts from migrated children, were significantly associated with one or more domains of quality of life. The findings emphasize the need to strengthen family support systems and encourage sustained emotional and financial engagement between migrant children and their elderly parents to promote healthy and active ageing in high-migration regions such as Punjab.

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