



VISITING HUSBANDS: ISSUES AND CHALLENGES OF WOMEN LEFT BEHIND

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Abstract: Migration is a well researched phenomenon, yet little is explored about the disrupting impact of male migration on marital fertility and wives' reproductive goals. Even in the context of Pakistan, the effects of migration on the reproductive outcomes of wives left at origin received less attention from social scientists. It is undeniable that long separation of husbands has profound implications for entire families, particularly for wives left behind. The present study highlights various problems faced by women in a situation where their husbands work abroad, leaving them behind to manage everything alone. This current anthropological study was carried out in a Potohari village located in District Attock, Punjab, Pakistan to ascertain the challenges and difficulties of isolated wives staying behind. This study analyses their psychological and emotional problems, lack of spousal communication, their social wellbeing, adjustment within families, sexual frustration, and disruptive childbearing. The findings reveal that women initially felt isolated and troubled due to their double workload, and later they experienced stress and frustration. The study concludes that women married to migrant husbands experience depression, low self-esteem, marital insecurity and a strong feeling of incomplete married life.

Keywords: Migrant husbands' wives, marital depression & instability, husbands' out-migration & wives' reproductive health, fertility