Influencing Factors of Rural Families' Migration to Urban Area: The Case of Kabul, Afghanistan

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Original Research Article

ABSTRACT

Aims: This study aimed to determine factors influencing rural families' migration to urban areas in Kabul, Afghanistan.
Place and Duration of Study: Data were collected in different neighbourhoods of Kabul, Afghanistan during the July-September period of 2019. Data analyses and manuscript preparation were completed in the October-December period of 2019.
Methodology: First, the most populated neighbourhoods of Kabul, particularly those areas where the majority of families migrated from rural areas were determined. The data of the study were collected from 400 rural-urban migrants in Kabul city. The questionnaires were filled during face to face informal meetings with households. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, and means. The questionnaire included socio-

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economic characteristics of rural-urban migrants, pushing and pulling factors which affected rural migration, reasons for insecurity in rural areas, and satisfaction and reintegration of migrants in Kabul city.

Results: The results show that unemployment with 9.53 and fear of terror with 9.15 are the most effective pushing factors for rural families to migrate. However, the most important pulling factors which make Kabul city attractive for rural families are the issues regarding rights (women rights with 8.82, having right to vote with 8.73 and human rights with 8.71).

Conclusion: In the last five years Afghanistan had huge number immigration internally (1.1 million person) and internationally (1.7 million people) Results of this study suggest that to slower rural-urban migration in Afghanistan, rural development programs should be implemented, and the priority of these programs should be given to the creation of employment opportunities and eliminating gender inequalities in rural areas. Otherwise, either rural-urban migration or dissatisfaction of being in Kabul and preferring not reintegrating back to their villages will make rural-urban migrants seek international migration.

1. INTRODUCTION

Migration of people from rural to urban areas has been a major problem, particularly for developing countries. In one hand, pushing factors of rural areas such as large families, inadequate agricultural lands, unproductive soils, and limited employment opportunities; on the other hand, pulling factors of urban areas such as better education and employment opportunities force people to migrate from rural to urban areas. Migrant is a person who is living in a place or a country other than his or her place or country of birth. India with 16.6 million immigrants is ranked first position and Afghanistan with 4.8 million immigrants is ranked 11th position around the world [1]. Beside international migration, more people have migrated internally, with more than 1 billion in developing countries alone. A study conducted with a sample of 31 developing countries showed that more than half of the people living in rural areas during their childhood migrated from one city to another. The research showed that 80% of domestic migration was related to rural areas, less than 30% includes migration from rural to urban areas, while the rest consists of rural to rural or urban to rural migration [2].

Mobility and movement have been part of Afghan's history. Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan were mostly the target of Afghans. Afghanistan had four huge waves of immigration. The first recorded migration was in 1850 which happened by thousands of Hazara households through the Islamic Republic of Iran fleeing from natural disasters and other crises. Low- income and unemployment caused the migration of Afghans between the 1960s and 1970s [3]. The second wave occurred during the Soviet invasion period (1979-1989). It was the first large wave of external migration. In this decade the Mujahedeen fought against Soviet Army. As a result, 6 million Afghans emigrated to various parts of the world; Pakistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran were the hosts of a huge number of Afghans immigrants. The main cause of their immigration was bombing and combat. The third wave occurred in Taliban regime when Mujahedeen occupied the urban areas of Kabul city and many educated middle-class people fled Afghanistan to the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan, however, the first voluntary re-integration took place between 1992 and 1995, over 1.3 million Afghans returned from the Islamic Republic of Iran. However, with the rising Taliban regime in 1994, the movement of Afghans to the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan began once again. Over 300,000 Afghans immigrated between 1991 and 2000 [4]. The fourth wave started in 2000 since then more than 5.8 million Afghans have returned home. Around 3.9 million returned from Pakistan and 900,000 of them from the Islamic Republic of Iran [5].

Although Afghanistan has struggled with external migration for many different causes which were not under the control of the government, internal migration also has been a major movement of people within the country. Internal population flows in Afghanistan have been rising in the post-Taliban period. The reasons for internal migration involve internal-conflicts, insecurity, landless-ness, lack of job opportunity and basic services in rural areas [6]. Over the past three decades, the level of internal displacements in Afghanistan has always been high. After the fall of the Taliban

regime in 2001, the displaced Afghans (over 1.2 million) due to internal conflicts returned to their homes with the improvements achieved in security conditions [4]. Despite the declining rate of return and new displacements in the South, the number of internal migrants started to rise again in the 2006-2008 period [7]. However, more than 1.1 million Afghans were internally displaced because of conflicts that occurred since 2016-2017 [8]. Fall of Farah (Anar Dara district) on 13 March 2018, and Kunduz in 28th September 2019 by Taliban caused a huge number of Kunduz and Farah residents to migrate to Kabul, other cities and even a huge number to other countries [9,10]. At the same time, the activities of Islamic State-Khorasan (ISIS) in the eastern cities of Afghanistan (Nigarhar and Kunar) caused the rural families to migrate from villages to the major cities like Kabul [11].

Rural areas and the agricultural sector have traditionally contributed to Afghanistan's economy for many decades. Since agriculture is a crucial sector for developing countries as it keeps a significant portion of the population in rural areas, makes contributions to national income and exports, provides labour and raw materials for the industry, and creates demand for industrial products such as chemicals and farm machinery [12,13]. Agriculture plays an important role in the nutrition of rural and urban people and the economic development of Afghanistan [14-16]. Soil and climate condition provides many advantages and opportunities to grow many agricultural commodities such as cereals, fruits, vegetables, and nuts. However, due to lack of advanced technology and extension services Afghanistan has weak production infrastructure, weak income generating sources and value-adding facilities, and small agricultural industry [17].

Although different authors and researchers stressed the importance and causes of external and internal migration in Afghanistan, there has been lack of research, particularly focusing on socioeconomic characteristics of rural-urban migrants, and the reasons for such internal population movements. This research is conducted to fill this gap, particularly searching the most effective pushing factors that caused rural-urban immigration and pulling factors that makes them settle in Kabul. Meanwhile, the re-integration back to the villages has been examined on the difference between the income

before and after immigration, in-securing factors and satisfaction of being in Kabul city.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The main material of this case study was information provided by administering questionnaires to 400 displaced people from different regions of Afghanistan in Kabul city. The minimum sample size was determined by using the formula developed by Cochran based on Likert type questions. This formula for a ten-point Likert scale (1 = the lowest affection, 10 = the highest affection) is expressed as follows [18]:

$$N_0 = t^2 s^2 / d^2$$
$$N_0 = (1.65)^2 (1.11)^2 / (0.01 \times 10)^2$$
$$N_0 = 2.723 \times 1.232 / 0.04$$
$$N_0 = 335.$$

Where N_0 is the minimum sample size, "t" (t = 1.65) corresponding to the accepted alpha level of 0.1, "s" is the standard deviation in the accessible population (there are nine intervals in a ten-point Likert scale and the standard deviation was calculated as 10/9 = 1.11), "d" shows the error limit accepted from the mean [18,19]. Using a 10-point Likert scale, 1% error limit, and 0.1 alpha level (t = 1.65), the minimum sample size was calculated as 335. Since a total of 400 questionnaires were completed and all of them were usable, data analyses were completed with this number.

A well-structured questionnaire was prepared to find out the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents, the pushing and pulling factors of migration, security reason, the satisfaction of being in Kabul city and re-integration to their villages. The questionnaire contains socio-demographic information of the respondents in the first section. At the second section, it contains pushing factors in 10-points of a chart rating scale from 1= the lowest affection to 10= the highest affection. Then in the third section, it contains security reasons in the multi-choice answer of fixed total scales. In the fourth section, it contains pulling factors in 10-points of a chart rating scale from 1= the lowest affection to 10= the highest affection. The last section contains satisfaction and reintegration of internally displaced people in Kabul in two options of answers as Yes and No [20]. The questionnaires were applied by arranging informal meetings with the respondents between July and September 2019.

Descriptive statistics including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations were used to analyze categorical and continuous data. An interpretive scale was developed by researchers to classify the effectiveness of each Likert item which forced respondents to migrate to Kabul city from rural areas. According to this scale, the Likert items which had a mean of 1-4 were classified as "low effective", 5-7 "medium effective", and 8-10 "highly effective". Different researchers have used similar scales to interpret various Likert items in social and behavioural sciences [21].

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Socio-demographic Characteristics

The socio-demographic characteristics of internally displaced people are presented in Table 2. The finding of this research shows that 52.3% of the interviewees were male and 47.8% of them were female. A large part (79.3%) of interviewees were married and 81% of the respondents' family size was between 5 and 8 people, with an average of 6.76. Illiteracy has the most part among the interviewees as 40.5% of the respondents were illiterate and 12% were high school graduates. Of the total families, 86.3% had only one or no employed persons. The income of rural-urban migrant families has changed after migration. Of the total families, 37.5% had an income of (40-60) US dollars per month. However, after immigration, 48.4% of rural-urban migrant families' income changed to (40-100) US dollars per month. The finding of this research shows that the income of rural-urban migrant families has been raised after migration. The average income before migration was 74.54 US dollars per month but it rises after immigration to 102.1 US dollars per month. It shows that 27.56 US dollars have been added in the income of the migrants after migration.

3.2 Pushing Factors for Internal Migration

The reasons which forced rural areas' residents to leave their towns and villages are considered as pushing factors. The questionnaire contains 36 pushing factors having the most effective impact on the countries dealing with war, like Afghanistan. The result shows that unemployment has the highest effect on rural families' migration. However, the difference between rural and urban unemployment is not too much (24.0% in rural areas and 26.5% in urban areas) [22]. This finding indicates that

many rural families leave their homes in villages and small towns with the hope of finding jobs and starting a new life in the Kabul city. However, they could not find employment opportunities as much as they expected before migration.

Table 1. Socio demographic characteristics of rural-urban migrant

Order	Variable	N=400	%
1	**Gender**		
	Male	209	52.3
	Female	191	47.8
	Total	**400**	**100.0**
2	**Marital status**		
	Married	317	79.3
	Single	43	10.8
	Divorced	1	0.1
	Widow	39	9.8
	Total	**400**	**100.0**
3	**Family size**		
	1-4 persons	34	8.5
	5-8 persons	327	81.8
	9-12 persons	39	9.8
	Total	**400**	**100.0**
4	**Education level**		
	Illiterate	162	40.5
	Primary school	65	16.3
	Secondary school	36	9.0
	High school	48	12.0
	Bachelor's degree	89	22.3
	Total	**400**	**100.0**
5	**Number of working people**		
	0-1 Person	345	86.3
	2-4 Person	55	13.8
	Total	**400**	**100.0**
6	**Family income before displacement ($ / month)**		
	0-35	89	22.3
	40-60	150	37.5
	70-150	132	33.0
	190-600	29	7.2
	Total	**400**	**100.0**
7	**Family income after displacement ($ / month)**		
	0-30	102	25.5
	40-100	195	48.4
	120-210	68	17.0
	250-600	35	8.8
	Total	**400**	**100.0**

War (fear of terror, security, religious extremism, inability to move freely in the village environment) is also one of the most effective pushing factors to migration. The most noticeable finding is "the Rights". Freedom of speech, conservative environment, human rights, women rights and

not having the right to vote has a high effect on rural-urban immigration. That is new among other pushing factors in the past. Despite the high effective pushing factors that caused rural-urban migrants' displacement, there were factors which were not considered as very effective pushing factors. Among these were lack of food safety, the idea of farmers' having lower social status, and poor health services in the rurality. Statistics show that 55% of the Afghan nation is living under the poverty line [23], and 12.5 million people are recognized as extremely food insecure where most of them are people who live in rural areas [23]. Although the national figures for food safety and poverty are unsatisfactory, these factors seem not to be the priority reasons for rural families to migrate to urban areas.

3.3 Security Reasons

A lot of insurgent groups are involved in creating insecurity in the country. The strongest insurgent groups in Afghanistan are the Taliban, Islamic State-Khorasan (ISIS), Narco-criminal organization, local warlords, and Taliban disjoint groups [24]. Around 58.6% of Afghanistan's land is under control or influence of government, 20.8% is contested zone between insurgents and government and 20.2% of the land is under control of insurgent groups where the majority is under the control of Taliban. The reported data shows a slight increase in the Taliban's areas which changed from 19.9% to 20.2% [25]. The most effective three illegal organizations that caused insecurity in the last five years are

Table 2. Pushing factors of rural-urban migrants

| Order	Pushing factors (N=400)	Mean	Std. deviation
1	Unemployment	9.53	1.26
2	Fear of terror	9.15	2.02
3	Lack of desire for children to be farmers	8.84	2.23
4	Difficult life condition	8.78	1.70
5	Religious extremism	8.77	2.29
6	Security	8.71	2.24
7	Freedom of speech	8.24	2.39
8	Inability to move freely in the village environment	8.23	2.49
9	The village environment is quite conservative	8.21	2.46
10	Not having the right to vote	8.19	2.49
11	Human right	8.19	2.47
12	Women rights	8.17	2.58
13	Unfair support of the state for the agricultural sector	7.90	2.40
14	Lack of food safety	7.50	1.61
15	The idea of farmers having low social status	7.45	2.59
16	Lack of health services	7.39	1.91
17	Lack of health care access	6.89	1.78
18	Lack of education opportunities	6.88	2.34
19	Less income	6.80	2.39
20	Leaving villages for education proposes	6.75	2.57
21	Request for more regular daily working hours	6.64	2.36
22	The desire to engage in social activities with friends rather than agriculture	6.49	2.77
23	The desire to prevent the marriage of their children	6.45	3.22
24	Mother mortality during childbirth	6.40	2.66
25	Lack of food	6.18	2.23
26	Poor education	6.10	1.94
27	Insufficient arable land	6.03	3.09
28	Lack of clean water	5.43	2.44
29	Lack of social activities	5.12	2.28
30	Access to media	4.38	2.19
31	Lack of water cultivation	4.16	2.25
32	Access to the internet	3.64	2.38
33	Lack of modern agricultural techniques application in the village	2.46	3.17
34	Family problems	.962	2.44
35	Act of force on farmers land selling	.630	1.88
36	The land division between brothers	.467	1.65
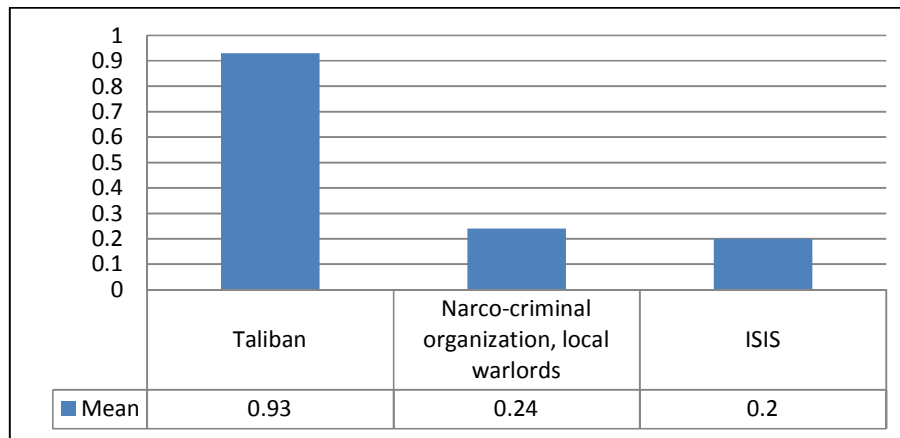
Fig. 1. Illegal organizations which cause insecurity

Taliban, Islamic State-Khorasan (ISIS) and Narco-criminal organization & local warlords. As the fear of terror, security, inability to move freely in the village environment is the most effective factors of rural-urban migration. This part will find the causes of the above-hinted factors. The finding shows that 93.35% of insurgency and insecurity caused by the Taliban, 24.5% by Narco-criminal the organization, local warlords and 20.5% by Islamic State-Khorasan (ISIS). Although the Islamic State-Khorasan (ISIS) are operating in Nangarhar, Kunar, Jawzjan, Sarpul, Ghur, Gazni, Badakhshan, and Parwan, Taliban and Narco-criminal & local warlords are operating in all parts of Afghanistan [26].

3.4 Pulling Factor

Pulling factors are reasons which amused the rural family's migration to urban areas. This part of the questionnaire contains twenty pulling factors. Findings of this research show those rights (Human rights, women's rights and having the right to vote) are considered as highly effective pulling factors by rural-urban migrants. However, other factors could be as effective which is a noticeable point. Kabul is the city suffering attacks from the Taliban and ISIS-K. It makes the city an unlivable place for the residence but being safe and secure is one of the highly effective factors which attracted rural families to Kabul. Better education has mid-affection as pulling factors on rural-urban migration, although, 90% of women and 63% of men are illiterates [27].

3.5 Satisfaction and Re-integration

This part searches the satisfaction of rural-urban migrants in Kabul and their re-integration back to

the village. As the respondents' answers for satisfaction, 79% of respondents were not satisfied with being in Kabul. Dissatisfactory reasons are insecurity, lack of income, unemployment and demanding a better life. Even, they prefer to leave the country instead of being in Afghanistan. Only 21% were satisfied with being in Kabul. Having a job, better income than before, having a better life than the village and better education opportunities are the reasons that make rural-urban migrants satisfied.

Re-integration is a big issue for all rural-urban migrants. The finding shows that 80% of respondents don't want to re-integrate back to their villages. Internal conflicts, insecurity, terror, military operation by government and foreign militaries, bombing, entity of terrorist (Taliban, ISIS, Al-Qaida and other terrorist bands), lack of income, lack of cultivation land, unemployment, lack of food, lack of education opportunities and starting new life in Kabul are the reasons that prevent rural families to re-integrate back to their villages. Only 20% of respondents are accepting to re-integrate back to their villages. Air pollution, having better income in rural areas than the city and having a better life in rural areas are the reasons that make rural-urban migrants re-integration voluntarily.

This study aimed to find out the most effective pushing and pulling factors of rural-urban migration (Kabul), the difference between before and after immigration income, life satisfaction in Kabul, re-integration to their villages' and ensuring factors in rural areas.

This research has shown that rights, security, and economic issues have the most effect on

Table 3. Pulling factors of rural-urban migrant

Order	Pulling factors	Mean	Std. deviation
1	Women rights	8.82	2.07
2	Having the right to vote	8.73	2.08
3	Human rights	8.71	1.98
4	Security	8.67	1.77
5	More job opportunities in cities	8.62	1.46
6	Freedom of speech	8.36	2.36
7	Economic opportunity in the city	7.91	1.96
8	Better education	7.53	1.65
9	The desire of having a more regular life as a family	7.48	2.66
10	Better health service in cities	7.34	2.07
11	Affected by the positive status of families previously moved to the city	7.24	2.53
12	Better health care in cities	7.22	1.96
13	The desire to find a non-agriculture job in the city	6.31	2.51
14	Food safety	6.03	1.84
15	Access to food	5.89	1.97
16	Access to shops in cities	5.41	2.07
17	Clean water	4.87	2.26
18	Access to the internet	4.65	2.02
19	Access to media	4.60	1.99
20	The wife doesn't want to live with mother in law and father in law	.805	2.13

Fig. 2. The satisfaction of rural-urban migrants
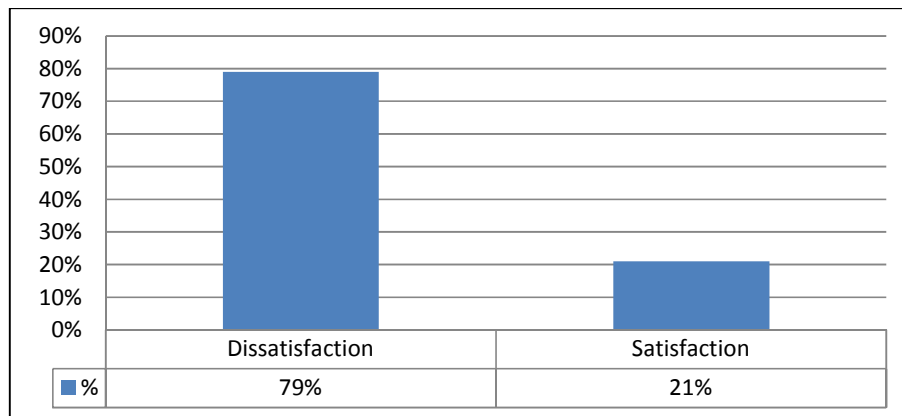
	Dissatisfaction	Satisfaction
%	79%	21%
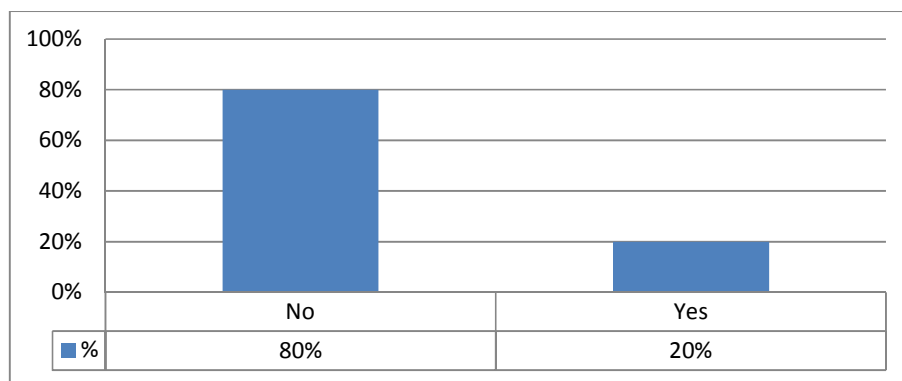
Fig. 3. Re-integration of rural-urban migrants

	No	Yes
%	80%	20%

rural area's families. As rural families' economy is related directly and indirectly to Agriculture & farming sector and the non-agriculture sector have not risen in the rural areas to create job opportunities for a huge number of landless rural families [17]. According to the Central Statistics Organization, the current unemployment rate is 23.9%. However, the gap between rural and urban area's unemployment is not that much (24.0% in rural areas, 26.5% in urban areas). A rate of 46.3% of Afghans is involved in some kind of activity which makes money [28].

For a long time, insecurity (Fear of terror, conflicts, religious extremism, and inability to move freely in the village environment) has been one of the strongest pushing factors for leaving rural areas. Mostly in Afghanistan, al-Qa'ida (AQ), Islamic Jihad Union (IJU), Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), Islamic State of Iraq and ash-Sham-Khorasan (ISIS-K), Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), al-Qa'ida in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS), Haqqani Taliban Network (HQN), Harakat ul-Mujahidin (HUM), Harakat ul-Jihadi-Islami (HUJI), Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps - Qods Force (IRGC-QF) Jaish-e-Mohammed (JEM), Jaysh al Adl, Lashkar I Jhangvi (LJ), and Lashkar-e Tayyiba (LT) are the cause of the insurgency. al-Qa'ida (AQ), Islamic Jihad Union (IJU), Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), Islamic State of Iraq and ash-Sham-Khorasan (ISIS-K), and Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) are based in rural areas of Afghanistan and the other groups are usually operating in rural areas, however, they are based out of Afghanistan's borders [29].

People in rural areas are feeling insecure about being around these insurgent groups. As one of the respondents who escaped from Alasay, Kapisa province in her marriage night. "Taliban attacked in my marriage party, assassinated the groom and I escaped from Alasay, Kapisa to Kabul", she said. Besides the economic and security factors, rights are considered as one of the strong factors that affected rural families' migration through Kabul. Freedom of speech, conservative environment, not having the right to vote, human right and women's rights are the most demanded factors that force rural-urban migration. Civil causalities, execution without a high court order, terror, freedom of speech, buggery (bacha-bazi), using kids as suicidal attackers and women's rights violations are human rights violations in Afghanistan. According to the Independent Human Rights Commission, the registered number of human rights violations

in Afghanistan was around 17 thousand in 2017 [30].

Rights (Women's rights, having the right to vote, human rights and freedom of speech), security, having more job opportunities were the most effective factors in pulling migrants through Kabul. However, the difference between employment in rural areas and urban area is not much (24.0% rural areas, 26.5% in urban areas) [28].

Security in Kabul was one of the main reasons for rural-urban immigration but between January and September 2019, the number of civil casualties in Kabul city was 1435 people which has the highest ranking on the list [31].

Human rights & women's rights are issues that are considered to migrate to Kabul by rural people. Kabul is the better place for self-developing and achieving daily life rights than rural areas. Holding demonstration, having social activities, participating in political activities, having the freedom of speech and accessibility of primary life facilities are possible in Kabul where it's impossible to happen in rural areas.

Life satisfaction in Kabul was about less than dissatisfaction. Employment and security were main causes of pulling factors through Kabul but the finding shows that their expectation from Kabul wasn't true as we said above that there is not that much difference between unemployment in rural and urban areas. At the same time, Kabul is suffering consecutive attacks by insurgency groups which cause more causalities than rural areas. Having a better life and getting access to the primary needs of life changed the idea of migrants to re-integrate back to their villages.

4. CONCLUSION

In the last five years, a lot of conflicts have occurred in Afghanistan and it caused a huge wave of movement internally and internationally. As the statistics show, 1.1 million displaced internally in 2019 and 1.7 million has left the country towards other parts of the world between (2016-2017) [8]. This research shows unemployment has the highest effect on rural-urban migration and pushes rural residence to leave their hometowns and prefer to settle in urban areas. Insecurity has a high effect after unemployment on rural-urban migrants, fear of terror, religious extremism and war are the main factors of insecurity. Lack of rights is also one of the effective pushing factors which include

human rights, women's rights; freedom of speech, the conservativeness of the village environment, and also not having the right to vote. Although, the Taliban has cut fingers of voters in the election of 2009 and 2014 [32,33]. The Taliban has a lead of insurgency in most parts of Afghanistan and Narco-criminal & warlords are followed.

The findings of this research show that rights are the most effective pulling factors of rural-urban migration. Women's rights, human rights, the right to vote and freedom of speech are the factors which include in the rights category, and also security and having more job opportunities in Kabul city has influenced rural-urban migration. Most of the rural-urban migrated families are not satisfied with being in Kabul. Although they prefer to leave the country because of being in the insecurity, bombing and unemployment in Kabul and at the same time, the majority don't have the intention to re-integrate back to their villages because their villages have been turned to insurgency' abode.

CONSENT

As per international standard, respondents' written consent has been collected and preserved by the author(s).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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