

Migration and Quality of Life

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ABSTRACT

This chapter explores the multifaceted concept of quality of life, delving into its historical roots, evolving interpretations, and complex linkages of migration on it. Quality of life encompasses diverse interpretations and varies greatly from person to person. The evolution of quality of life studies, driven by post-World War II societal awareness, led to a holistic approach that considers subjective well-being. Migration, while promising economic and cultural benefits, presents challenges impacting migrants' well-being. A research conducted in the urban slums of Southern Delhi shed light on migration's impact on quality of life of the sample selected through systematic random sampling technique. The findings of the study suggested that more comprehensive studies on migration and quality of life are essential for informed policy-making and societal development, requiring a future-oriented perspective to address emerging trends.

Keywords— migration; quality of life (key words)

I. INTRODUCTION

Quality of life is a fundamental and all-encompassing concept that resonates with every individual's desire for a fulfilling and contented existence. This concept has gained widespread popularity and has become a trendy and overused buzzword in various spheres. Its widespread appeal makes it a dream topic for those in the media and marketing industry, as it resonates with the desires and aspirations of individuals in modern society.

Amidst its popularity, there is a need to rediscover the essence and depth of this notion, appreciating its true meaning beyond the superficial usage, and examining its profound implications on the well-being and happiness of people worldwide. This term 'quality of life' inherently carries ambiguity, encompassing two distinct aspects: the individual's personal experience of their life and the living conditions they encounter. As a result, what constitutes a high quality of life is deeply subjective and varies greatly from person to person. While some may equate it with material wealth or overall life satisfaction, others may define it based on their capabilities and opportunities. This subjectivity underscores the complexity of measuring and understanding quality of life, as it transcends simple metrics and necessitates a more nuanced and individualized approach. Appreciating the diverse perspectives on quality of life allows us to embrace its multifaceted nature, acknowledging that there is no one-size-fits-all definition and that each person's perception and interpretation play a significant role in shaping their overall well-being.

According to UNESCO (14), quality of life covers all aspects of living including material satisfaction of vital needs as well as more transcendental aspects of life such as personal development, self-realization and a healthy ecosystem whereas WHOQOL-100 (15) defined this term as individual's perception of their position in life in the context of the culture and value systems in which they live and in relation to their goals, expectations, standards and concerns.

In a model of quality of life used in the research project carried out by the Centre for Health Promotion, University of Toronto 'Quality of Life' suggests that the degree to which a person enjoys the important possibilities of his or her life results from the opportunities and limitations each person has in his or her life and reflect the interaction of personal and environmental factors.

Since the early 1940s, there has been an increasing interest in the assessment of quality of life (7) surged in the aftermath of World War II, driven by a growing awareness of the prevailing social inequalities. This newfound consciousness served as a catalyst for the emergence of social indicators research, which sought to quantitatively measure and understand societal disparities. Subsequently, researchers directed their attention towards exploring subjective well-being and quality of life, delving into the individual experiences and perceptions that contribute to overall life satisfaction. This evolving academic interest not only shed light on the multifaceted nature of well-being but also paved the way for a more holistic and comprehensive approach to

study human flourishing and societal progress.

Sullivan (13) stated that quality of life first gained political recognition in the United States during the mid-1950s and in Europe during the 1960s. However, it was not until the late 1970s that it transformed into a scientific concern, marked by a substantial increase in publications on the topic. This significant growth in the literature on quality of life encompassed a diverse array of disciplines, such as psychology, medicine, and sociology. As researchers and scholars explored this multidimensional subject more profoundly, the understanding of well-being and its determinants evolved, fostering a more comprehensive and interdisciplinary approach. (10).

The impetus for studying the quality of life in the general population was rooted in the social indicators movement. By the late 1960s, it became evident that relying solely on gross economic indicators like the gross national product for comparing countries was insufficient (3). Instead, the concept of social indicators emerged as an alternative, aiming to encompass not only economic development but also the social progress of a nation (9).

However, it became clear that while social indicators provided valuable information about cultural units such as towns, states, and countries, they offered limited insights into the quality of life experienced by individuals within those units. This realization sparked interest in assessing the subjective perceived quality of life within population samples in regions like the United States, Europe, and Australia (7). The focus on subjective indicators intensified as researchers struggled to establish consistent relationships between objective social indicators and subjective measures.

The central focus of the social indicators movement remains the comparison between cultural units or the assessment of changes within these units over time, regardless of whether objective or subjective measures of quality of life are employed (4). This ongoing pursuit of understanding and evaluating quality of life continues to shape research and policy discussions, shedding light on the complex interplay between objective conditions and individual perceptions of well-being.

II. MIGRATION AND QUALITY OF LIFE

Migration is an important phenomenon for global development, in facilitating cultural exchange, labor mobility, and knowledge transfer. It addresses demographic imbalances, fosters economic growth, and enriches societies with diverse perspectives. Migration helps in innovation, fills skill gaps, and contributes to global cooperation, shaping a more interconnected and dynamic world. This can significantly impact the quality of life of individuals and communities involved. When people move from one place to another, whether within a country or internationally, various factors come into play, influencing their well-being and overall satisfaction. Migrants constitute a vulnerable population that undertakes the journey from less-developed regions within India to metropolitan cities in search of employment and income prospects. Regrettably, a significant majority of these migrants encounter challenges that encompass livelihood insecurity and a sense of neglect in their new non-native destinations (12).

On the one hand, migration can offer opportunities for individuals to improve their quality of life. People may choose to migrate in pursuit of better economic prospects, access to education and healthcare, improved living conditions, or escape from political instability or conflicts. For some, migration provides a chance to escape poverty and enhance their standard of living. Additionally, exposure to new cultures and experiences can enrich their lives, broadening their perspectives and fostering personal growth.

Conversely, migration can also present challenges that impact quality of life. Migrants may face difficulties in adapting to new environments, language barriers, and discrimination, which can affect their mental and emotional well-being. Separation from family and support networks can lead to feelings of isolation and loneliness. Moreover, migrants often encounter precarious living and working conditions, which may adversely affect their physical health and financial stability.

The quality of life of migrants is closely linked to their social integration and the support systems available to them in the host country. Policies that facilitate integration, access to education, healthcare, and social services can play a crucial role in enhancing the well-being of migrants. Creating inclusive societies that celebrate diversity and promote social cohesion can help migrants feel a sense of belonging and contribute positively to their overall quality of life.

Migration is often an endeavor to enhance one's quality of life. While this might seem promising, especially when moving to more affluent countries, the link between migration and happiness isn't straightforward. A rise in income doesn't necessarily equate to greater happiness, potentially leading to disappointment. Migrants to wealthier nations can encounter economic setbacks that impact happiness (1).

For the communities receiving migrants, the impact on quality of life can also be multifaceted. While migration can bring cultural diversity, economic growth, and a skilled workforce, it can also strain resources, lead to social tensions, and create challenges in providing services to an increasing population.

According to Jeangross (8), their study revealed intriguing findings concerning the impact of migration

on the quality of life among rural adults with rare diseases. For this specific group, migration exhibited a direct positive effect on physical and environmental aspects of their quality of life. Additionally, migration was found to have positive indirect effects on physical and social quality of life, attributed to increased individual income. However, there was a notable negative indirect effect on environmental quality of life due to reduced tangible support. Surprisingly, the results of his study differed significantly for the urban participants. In this group, neither direct nor indirect associations of migration with quality of life were found to be statistically significant. This contrast suggests that the effects of migration on quality of life vary depending on the rural or urban context and the specific circumstances and challenges faced by individuals.

A research was conducted by Chaurasia and Shukul (2) with the objective to analyze the quality of life of in-migrants of Delhi as perceived by them within the previous 3-4 years of the study. The sample was selected through the systematic random technique from the purposively selected four urban slums as these were the newly established ones. The validity of the scale was established by giving it to the different experts of the various fields. Reliability was calculated through test-retest method which was found to be 0.81.

The perceived quality of life for the study was defined as the in-migrants' perception to their overall situation before and after migration. Interview schedule was selected as a tool to collect data and homemaker was selected as unit of enquiry. A scale was developed which had multiple choice questions in relation to respondents' quality of life at the place of origin (before migration) and at the time of data collection (at the place of migration). It covered various aspects such as financial security, food (frequency and quality), clothing (quality, quantity and adequacy), house and housing condition, health and health facilities, communication facilities, community facilities, leisure and recreation, psychological and social aspects in terms of family support, belongingness, neighborhood, community and communication, environmental conditions.

To measure the perceived quality of life, each option was ascribed a score according to the serial number. The scores were summated and possible range of score was divided equally into three categories which depicted the respondents' perceived extent of low, moderate or good quality of life both before migration and at the time of data collection. Higher scores indicated the good quality of life whereas lower scores indicated the low quality of life. These scores helped in computing the weighted means for each parameter that ranged between one to six. Data was calculated and tabulated by using analysis of variance and coefficient of correlation.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Background Information:

Majority of the respondents (n=199) hailed from U.P. whereas nearly one-fifth were from other states and a little more than that were from Rajasthan and settled in Delhi. About less than half of the respondents migrated in the year 2000 from their place of origin to Delhi and a little less than those migrated in the year 2001. Amongst the total sample more women migrated with their family when they were in the age group of 26-35 years.

B. Socio-economic status (SES) of in-migrants:

More than three-fourth respondents had low socio-economic status before migration but immediately after migration, it was deteriorated and all of them fell into the category of low SES. At the time of data collection, a significant change was observed that the socio-economic status of the approximately half of the respondents improved but rest of the respondents still had low socio-economic status.

Table1: Distribution of the respondents by socio-economic-status scores (Community wise and total)

S.No.	Socio-economic-status (in Delhi)	Respondents (n=199)									
		Bapu Camp (Delhi)		Ayanagar (Delhi)		Sambhav Camp (Delhi)		Jona Puria (Delhi)		Total (Delhi) (n=199)	
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
1.	BM*										
	Low(11-68)	59	85.5	6	20.0	58	96.7	84	85.0	157	78.8
	Moderate (69-125)	10	14.5	24	80.0	2	3.3	6	15.0	42	21.1
	High (126-183)	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
	Total	69	100	30	100	60	100	40	100	199	100
2.	IAM**										
	Low(11-68)	69	100	30	100	60	100	40	100	199	100
	Moderate (69-125)	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
	High (126-183)	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
	Total	69	100	30	100	60	100	40	100	199	100

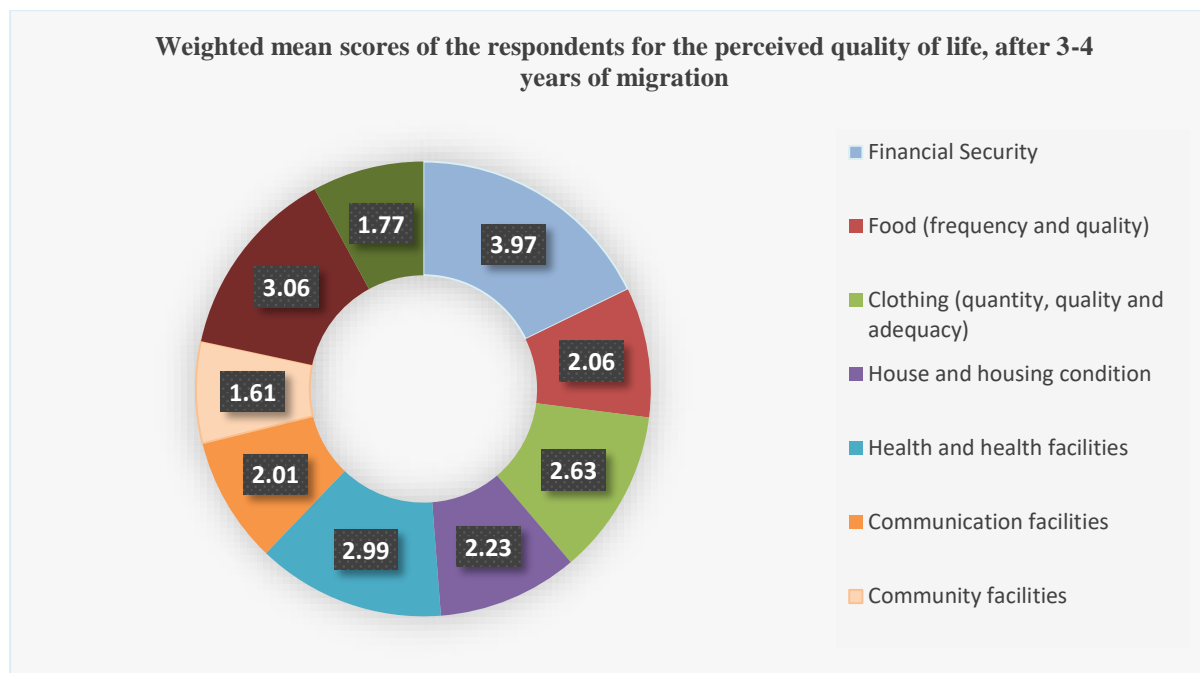
3.	ADC***										
	Low(11-68)	39	56.5	2	6.7	47	78.8	8	20	96	48.24
	Moderate (69-125)	30	43.5	28	93.3	13	21.7	32	80	103	51.75
	High (126-183)	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
	Total	69	100	30	100	60	100	40	100	199	100

BM*= Before migration; IAM**=Immediately after migration; ADC***=At the time of data collection

C. Extent of Goodness of Quality of Life:

Almost all the respondents of all the communities perceived their quality of life low before migration. Very, very few respondents of Jonapuria community perceived their quality of life moderately to some extent. At the time of data collection, all the respondents perceived that their quality of life was improved. The state wise and religion wise distribution of quality of life showed the same perception. Almost all the respondents of all the communities perceived their quality of life low before migration whereas they found improvement in that to some extent at the time of data collection. The weighted means score for the perceived quality of life had improved after migration. It was found that score was 2.03 at the time of data collection. A study done by Mitra (11) also mentioned that well-being of migrant workers improved over the period of time but many of them continually led to the low quality of life.

The data showed that in-migrants perceived the parameters-communication facilities, community facilities, food (quality and adequacy), housing, latrines and drainage, psychological & social aspects and environment conditions-caused their poor quality of life. Parameters of health and health facilities, clothing (quantity, quality and adequacy) and financial security and leisure & recreations were found to be the cause for the moderate quality of life of the in migrants families residing in Delhi. Gwede (6) also concluded in their study that migrants often find themselves working in substandard conditions that lack essential amenities like safe water, proper sanitation, and clean air. Additionally, the social environment of the city they migrate to might not be conducive to their well-being, with a significant risk of encountering discrimination.



Graph 1: Weighted mean scores of the respondents for the perceived quality of life after 3-4 years of migration

The study concluded that the perception of respondents was found to be positively related with by the socio-economic status of the respondents and negatively with the extent of problems faced by the in-migrant families' immediately after migration in November 2004. The positive relationship was found with the extent of contact at the place of origin, perceived benefits and extent of coping strategies by these families. The perception of quality of life varied with the variables education of the respondents, occupation of the head of the household, family income, problems faced and coping strategies adapted by the in-migrants.

IV.MIGRATION DYNAMICS AND QUALITY OF LIFE: INSIGHTS, IMPLICATIONS, AND FUTURE TRENDS

As the landscape of quality of life continually evolves, conducting comprehensive studies becomes imperative to navigate the complexities of migration patterns and their impact on various aspects of human well-being. One such avenue of investigation is the migration patterns of individuals moving to Delhi from different states and countries. Additionally, a comparative analysis could shed light on migration trends among India's major metropolitan cities, providing valuable insights into potential economic and social losses linked to the movement of intellectual and skilled individuals.

In this context, a crucial endeavor would involve assessing the perceived and observed quality of life of these migrants. By undertaking longitudinal studies, researchers could delve deep into the challenges faced by migrants over time and the coping strategies they employ. Such investigations would offer a holistic perspective on the transformative journey of these individuals, encompassing both the struggles and triumphs that contribute to shaping their quality of life.

The urgency for conducting comprehensive studies in the realm of immigrant quality of life becomes evident considering its implications for governmental policies. In one of the study, Firdaus (5) also mentioned that a thorough examination of the socioeconomic and environmental challenges posed by migrants, as well as the challenges faced by migrants themselves, is essential for the development of comprehensive policies. This in-depth analysis will provide the necessary insights to create effective strategies that address the complex interplay between migration, societal well-being, and environmental sustainability. Thus, through an in-depth analysis of migrants' experiences, researchers could provide critical insights to aid in the formulation of policies that optimize the well-being of those transitioning from their places of origin to Delhi or even across international borders. This, in turn, could foster an environment where migrants can thrive and elevate their quality of life.

One vital aspect that the research could emphasize is the link between migration and income generation activities. The ability to maintain a stable economic condition during the migration process plays a pivotal role in overall well-being. Understanding how migrants' economic prospects impact their quality of life could lead to tailored policies aimed at providing enhanced economic opportunities and improved social economic status.

Furthermore, it's essential to merge these research efforts with the futuristic trends that are shaping migration and quality of life. The advent of technology-enabled mobility, climate-induced migration, and the unique challenges posed by an aging population all have the potential to significantly alter migration dynamics. By juxtaposing current migration patterns with these emerging trends, researchers can anticipate challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.

V. CONCLUSION

The concept of quality of life intricately intertwines with migration dynamics, unravelling a multifaceted interplay of personal perceptions, socio-economic realities, and environmental contexts. This exploration underscores the intricate and multifaceted nature of quality of life, emphasizing that it encompasses not only material well-being but also emotional, social, and environmental dimensions. The motivations behind migration, whether driven by economic opportunities, access to better living conditions, or the escape from adversity, illuminate the complex relationship between mobility and the enhancement of quality of life.

Migration brings about both opportunities and challenges to individuals and communities alike. The positive impact of migration on quality of life can manifest as improved economic prospects, access to better living conditions, and exposure to diverse cultural experiences. However, the hurdles of adapting to new environments, language barriers, and discrimination can significantly impact mental and emotional well-being. The presence of robust support systems and effective integration policies emerges as a critical determinant in shaping the quality of life for migrants, underscoring the importance of cultivating inclusive societies.

The study revealed that the perceived quality of life among in-migrants is intricately linked with their socio-economic status, adaptive strategies, and social networks. The findings suggest that migration can indeed lead to improvements in the perceived quality of life, particularly when individuals experience enhanced socio-economic opportunities and adopt effective coping mechanisms. This underscores the need to consider not only economic advancement but also the psychosocial well-being when evaluating quality of life.

In summation, comprehending the intricate relationship between migration and quality of life calls for a comprehensive assessment that takes into account socio-economic realities, adaptive strategies, cultural integration, and the broader environmental milieu. This inquiry illuminates the multi-dimensional character of quality of life within the context of migration, prompting forthcoming research and policy endeavors to adopt a holistic perspective while addressing the well-being of migrants and their host societies. By delving into this intricate interplay, societies can aspire to cultivate environments that nurture the enhancement of quality of life for all, regardless of their migratory status.

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