

Transnational Migration and Typologies of Remittances between Punjab and The Netherlands

Atinder Pal Kaur¹

Abstract

Migration often leads to separation experienced by families. At the same time, in the case of international migration, transnational families can enjoy remittances from migrants. Most of the analyses by economists show that flow of remittances are crucial to fulfill economic needs of the left-behind families. Since such flow of money plays a vital role in alleviating financial difficulties. Beyond financial support, the sender and receiver also share an emotional bond which is the key to these transactions. These remittances are not only a tool to revive from economic hardship, but also act as a relationship symbol between migrants and families. Moreover, the choices that migrants make to remit money for certain purposes and on certain occasions reflect a complex typology. This typology remains a neglected area of research that this article focuses on.

Keywords: Transnational migration; Transnational families; Remittances; web of relationships; sense of belonging

Introduction Transnational migration; Transnational families; Remittances; web of relationships; sense of belonging

In the development discourse related to international migration, remittances feature as a key aspect of analysis, and they have a significant impact on the economies of communities and even countries (Sirkeci et al., 2012). At the macro level, researchers perceive remittances in terms of financial capital which stimulates the value addition in the foreign exchange reserves of a country and also has an impact on alleviating poverty among thousands of receiving families (Lo, 2008). Family remittances, do form a major share of overall remittances flow which includes regular remittances for the family budget, household bills, or to repay debts (Singh, 2012). Other aims of remittances are to support the children's education of the migrant or to tackle emergencies (Kaur, 2020; 2021). Remittances also contribute to family savings and help in asset creation (Baldé, 2011; Kaur and Kaur, 2022). At a social and emotional level, remittances strengthen ties between migrants and their families, giving birth to 'transnational

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families' (Baldassar et al. 2007). I use the term transnational families to define the maintenance of the relationship between migrants and their families across national geographies (Skrbiš, 2008; Bryceson and Vuorela, 2002).

Literature is replete with the pattern of utilization of remittances by left-behind families as well as decision-making regarding money flows. Since the 90s, most of the research has focused on gender and migration as well as the flow of remittances to the left-behind families in which remittances are received from their male members or husbands. Such kind of research in which male migration is dominant and the increase of transnational families is more visible in Sri Lanka (Handapangoda, 2014), China (Wu and Ye, 2016), Bangladesh (Bélanger and Rahman, 2013), Nepal (Rajkarnikar, 2020) Vietnam, Philippines (Hoang et al., 2015), and India (Kaur, 2022).

In addition, the studies have unveiled the challenges faced by the 'left-behind' families including the budding tension between senders and receivers in relation to the pattern of disbursement of remittances and women's participation in the decision-making process, especially in the rising number of nuclear families in which one spouse is a migrant. Although migration is usually viewed from an economic standpoint with money being sent for family welfare, this exchange is amalgamated with emotional and family bonds which Singh et al. (2012) rightly interpret in the form of care money.

However, in this paper, I demonstrate that there are many invisible meanings underlying remittances sent by migrants. First, the sender shares an emotional bond with the receiver which serves as the foundation of these transactions and remittances help to maintain a sense of belongingness with the families. In addition, I have focused on how the receivers view the remittances on receiving during special occasions. So, the practice of sending remittances is dynamic in that the sender chooses to remit money on different occasions for different purposes. In this paper, I have defined these remittance practices into a typology of remittances, particularly in Indian Punjabi.

India remains a major country of origin for international labour migration. The Indian diaspora comprises 18 million people worldwide and India receives the highest remittance globally --US \$ 89 billion in 2021 (IOM, 2022). Dusenbery and Tatla (2009) have also stressed that India, one of the world's largest beneficiaries of migration has started paying heed to its Diaspora populations in recent years owing to the impact on its foreign exchange reserves. The state of Punjab, in North India, has one of the highest proportions of migrants overseas. Estimates suggest that approximately 33% of the total remittances to Punjab come from North America and Europe whereas West Asia and 'Gulf' countries contribute 15%. Besides, South America, Africa, and East Asia contribute 13% of the total remittances (Rajan et al., 2015). The history of migration from Punjab dates back over a century ago. It started during British colonialism when thousands of Punjabis mostly men were recruited to serve as indentured labor on plantations or later recruited as soldiers to fight as a part of the British colonial army in other parts of the British Empire. This created dispersed settlements across British colonies. (Singh, 2008). By the 1880s, Sikh settlements appeared in the Malaya States and Hong Kong, where Sikhs worked as policemen (Sandhu, 1969). Between 1903 and 1908, Punjabis entered North America (Canada) and touched the shore of the United States of America. Early immigrants in America hailed predominantly from Jullundur and Hoshiarpur districts of Punjab and the majority of the early Punjabi Sikhs were Jats (La Brack, 2015; Tinker, 1977). Punjab is often referred to as the 'land of five rivers' divided into three cultural



zones- Majah, Malwa, and Doaba. In the 20th century, a major share of the migrating population of Punjab came from the Doaba region of the state with the emigrants moving to all parts of the world to pursue higher economic benefits and a better standard of living. Especially after the oil boom of the 1970s, migration from the Doaba region has increased due to a sudden demand spike for labour on construction sites and factories, in Gulf countries in West Asia (Kaur, 2017). Over the last few years, there has been an increment in 'left-behind' families in the Doaba region owing to this labour migration (Kaur, 2019). These 'left behind' families maintain strong ties with their respective migrants and routinely receive direct remittances. As a community, Punjabis have a strong, close-knit kinship system, 'Parivar' (family) is always first. Therefore, the altruistic behaviour of migrants always plays a crucial role in decision-making about remittances sent home (Lucas and Stark, 1985). These remittances include various types of monies that are sent on different occasions to their extended kin to maintain transnational relations.

Existing research on migration from Punjab has focused on the issue of destination countries, and employment opportunities for migrants. However, there are several unanswered questions pertaining to migration from Punjab such as: How are remittances perceived by the sender and the receiver? Are there other implications apart from the economic? What are the impacts of these other social and cultural considerations? How does this sustain or strengthen the relationships between migrant senders and receiver families? Such questions regarding the typology of remittance remain unanswered in the existing literature. Yet, they are critical to understand how the choice to send remittances is in fact, shaped by several underlying social and cultural reasons. Similarly, the utilization of those remittance flows sheds light on important sociological structures and attitudes among families and communities.

This study aims to fill the gaps in current research by presenting empirical research relating to various typologies of remittances.

Research on Remittances in Punjab

Current research on migration especially from Punjab has primarily focused on economic interpretations of remittances repeatedly voicing the idea that remittances are about supporting a survival strategy among the left-behind families (Kaur, 2022). Migrants tend to work hard and remit more after maintaining healthy savings which is economic in nature (Sirkeci et al., 2012). Further, remittances symbolized as economic hedge which is a channel to support households, cover expenses and also for investment, lastly at national level too (Sirkeci et al., 2012).

Empirical literature also supports this, further demonstrating that substantial portions of the earnings are remitted to family members who are left behind (Semyonov and Gorodzeisky, 2005) whereby a significant share of the remittances are used for household budgets (Adams and Cuecuecha, 2013), children's education (Edward and Ureta, 2003; Kaur, 2016). Kaur (2019) emphasises that remittances increased well-being in the left behind families which became visible by the construction of houses and the purchase of commercial land. Similarly in agrarian societies major share of remittances is also invested in agricultural land and the accumulation of property (Kaur, 2020; 2022). Remittances also invest to get better health care facilities (Nguyen et al., 2006) and rebuilding of old houses (Roy et al., 2015). According to Taylor (1999), remittances are used by left-behind families to partake in local politics and invest in a small business, rather than just spending on consumer goods and luxury items

(Cohen, 2011). Migration studies from Morocco and Mexico reflect remittances help to raise the standards of living and material wellbeing of the migrants, their families, and communities but that often they are reluctant to utilize such money on business ventures (DeHass and Vezzoli, 2010). Studies of Bangladesh, migration shows a positive effect that remittances were used for household consumption, which helped to reduce poverty (Nath and Mamun, 2010). Rahat (1990) emphasises that households rely on remittances and other occupational income and therefore do not need their women to work in agriculture. Mahmood (2010) in district Toba Tek Singh has endorsed that while 60.8% of women felt a sense of social protection with the remittances sent to them and felt better economic status after the migration of their husbands. In particular, remittances have increasingly been recognized as potential development resources (Kapur, 2003). Gulati (1983) was the first in India to emphasize that significant sources of income came from remittances, and that most of the houses depend upon such income to meet their day-to-day consumption expenses. Remittances are also used to purchase land, and facilitate savings and investments.

Singh (2018) emphasises that remittances utilize for household expenditure and elderly care in India. While in the upward castes' remittances spend on the construction of houses, buying gold ornaments and consumer durables. Similarly, in the case of Bangladesh remittances utilize for loan payments and primarily in consumption of food purposes (Kumar et al., 2018). In addition, remittances also send and utilize in buying of lands, houses, and invest in education and business (Abbas et al., 2014). Kumar (2019) argues that the macro role of remittances helps in poverty alleviation in Bangladesh. Similarly, Chaudhary (2020) mentioned that macro level impact of sending remittances in improving socio-economic conditions of family, reducing poverty, and bringing social and political awareness in the village. In the case of Nigeria, youth migrants send remittances for buying agricultural equipment, and paying for school in their households (Alleluyanatha and Treasure, 2021). Ali et al. (2017) mentioned that available remittances increase consumption power and similarly ostentatious consumption expenditure increases. Contrary, Kayaoğlu (2017) underlines that remittances are spent not to improve agricultural productivity and rural employment rather to build non-productive infrastructure in Turkey. Most studies more or less focus on the economic side of the remittances via using a micro or macro approach. However, a few researchers defined remittances beyond economic terms as Ullah and Alkaff (2018) focused on biological remittances that are the born / unborn children from wedlock in female overseas labour migration in the case of Philippines and Indonesia. Also, Ullah et al. (2022) defined social, political and cultural remittances which are transferred with the migrant's destination to home countries during their visits. These remittances are defined by Levitt (2001) as social remittances and social capital that bring by migrants during their visit to their home and host countries during migration. Singh et al. (2010) suggest that remittances are also used by migrant families as a care economy that is from the perspectives of the sender and receiver. Thus, the present study focuses on the sociological interpretation of remittances in which the sender and receiver's points of view are included to recognize the hidden function and meaning attached to remittances.

Data and Methods

The data for this research was collected through a longitudinal survey from 2016-2020 via open-ended interviews and participant observation in different settings. A total of 107 respondents have been included in the study belonging to the Netherlands, Gulf migrants,

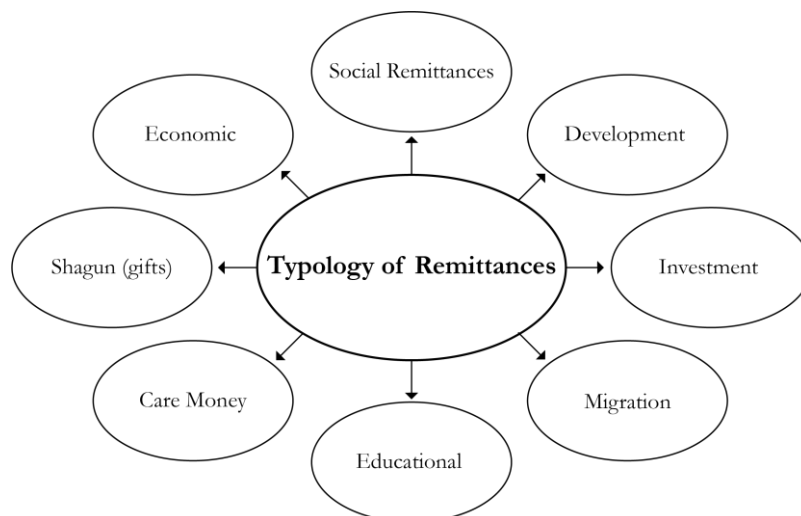


left behind families, and returnee migrants. In addition, 27 case studies have been collected from Punjabis living in the Netherlands (via visiting gurudwara, Sikh Temple), attending daily morning prayers, and having '*langer*' (afternoon meal). Questions have been asked about their visit to Punjab, families left behind, connection with kinship, and the occasion of sending remittances. Furthermore, 64 case studies have been conducted with Punjabi left behind families staying in the Doaba region of Punjab. Lastly, interviews have been conducted with 10 Gulf migrants during their holiday visit to their homeland Punjab. A total of 6 returnees migrant discussion on remittances has also been considered. This research, therefore, attempts to understand the indirect implications and 'hidden meanings' of remittances from a sociological standpoint in which the sender/receiver's emotions are also involved in decision-making and where money is used as a medium of maintaining the relationship, care, and love in transnational settings. For these purposes, narratives, talks, and respondents' discussions are quoted to support the arguments throughout the paper. To maintain the anonymity of respondents, pseudonyms have been used in the paper.

Findings and Discussion

Remittances Beyond Economic Transfers: Remittances play an important role in receiving families because they depend on their migrants' earnings. The exchange of goods and money between migrants and non-migrant families always remains a part of the discussion because when a person migrates to a host country, the connection, love, and altruistic behaviour always motivate him to send back (Lucas and Stark, 1985). The flow of remittances between migrants and non-emigrants defines the transnational spaces in which those practices occur. Thus, remittances are an important way to maintain transitional relations that connect people to their geographical locations and cultural diversities. Generally, perceived remittances are defined as survival strategies to create savings which will help to overcome poverty and market constraints. These remittances are generally viewed as economic assistance; however, these transactions also have an emotional value. Thus, remittances also have a non-economic interpretation that is beyond an economic term in the receiving families and communities (Mckenzie and Menjivar, 2011). In this manner remittances actually include different types of monies (Fig.1) that flow from migrants to their families or communities.

Figure 1. Typology of Remittances.



Remittances in Economic Terms: The major share of remittances is being utilized to fulfil the basic needs of the households (Lipton,1980) and the amount usually sent to maintain household budgets (Gulati, 1987). Results from Turkey (Toepfer,1985) and Yemen (Swanson, 1979), and Sub-Saharan Africa (Adepoju, 1988) show that international remittances are spent on consumption rather than production. Studies in India also show that remittances are usually spent on meeting the family's basic needs and paying bills (Gulati, 1983; Zachariah and Rajan, 2007). Therefore, the major share of the remittances is spent on fulfilling family requirements and purchasing daily supplies (Kaur, 2017).

During my visit to village Nassirpur in Punjab, I met one of my respondents Gulab Kaur who was living in a nuclear family with her two children. Her husband was a migrant in Dubai. She mentioned that her husband sent her money for the family budget. At first, she purchased groceries and then paid the bills. After that, the money was spent on children's education. She said that her responsibility was to run the household with the husband's money. The major portion of the remittances was spent on “family needs”.

Similarly, Rani said that the money she received was for the “family budget” and to pay bills. Her husband gave a specific amount and usually mentioned on phone calls that the money was for “household expenditures”.

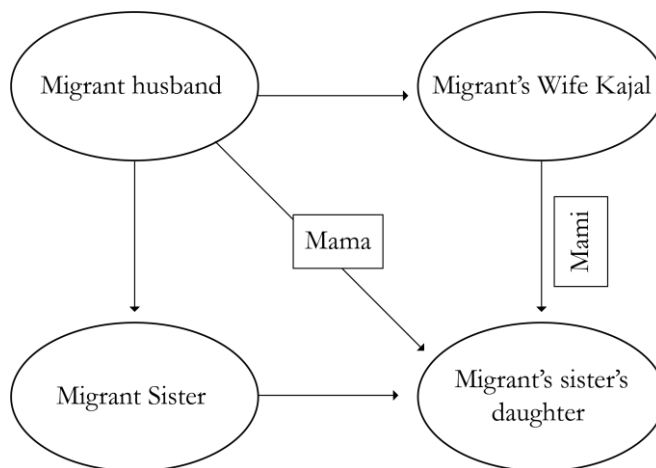
Harminder also narrated that her husband living in Dubai sent remittances primarily to maintain the family budget. She said that he was the “sole earner” of the family and that it was his “duty” to send money for the family. This suggests that it was a reciprocal exchange between receivers and senders whenever they sent remittances and families received that money. When researchers emphasize only the economic aspects, it appears to be an instrumental understanding of remittances only from the sender's view. This is the interpretation Lucas and Stark give in their work “New Economic Labour Migration” (NELM) that remittances are pure altruistic behaviour of the sender (Akeson, 2011). However, from these studies, the concept of relational perspective is missing. I wish to emphasize that senders and receivers of remittances share a bond and a sense of belongingness with their families. This attachment gratifies migrants to remit money which is much deeper than mere economic reasons.



Remittances in the form of *Shaguns* (Gift): Punjabis have a close-knit society in which kinship relations play a vital role. So, a migrant has multiple relations with his family—as a brother, husband, son, and uncle. In Punjabi, there are different names for each of these relationships—they are known as *Bhra* (brother), *Pati* (Husband), *Puter* (Son), *Chacha / Taya / Fufjad* (Paternal Uncle), and *Mama/ Massar* (Maternal Uncle). The migrant has a responsibility towards the extended family for whom he is also a gift provider on family occasions such as weddings because it works as a status symbol for him.

Secondly, demonstrating love through gift-making towards their kinship always brings ‘izzat’ (honour) to migrants. In this way, the *shaguns* are given in cash or kind (gift) to show love and care to their beloved ones on special occasions. All this is in addition to sending regular remittances.

India has a rich calendar of festivals --*Divali, Holi, New Year, Rakhi*, etc. There are also family ceremonies related to birth, death, and marriage which are also occasions for sending remittances. During my visits to Punjabi families in Punjab and in the Netherlands, I explored different reciprocities and underpinning social meanings associated with remittances. As a Punjabi myself, I shared a culture and language with my interviewees. This created an easy-flowing conversation whereby the respondents were comfortable sharing details with me about their family’s expectations as well as their own self-perceptions and sense of ‘belonging’ which influenced the timing and motivation for making remittances on different occasions. Harjeet Singh living in the Netherlands mentioned that during his visit to Punjab, he gifted watches and perfumes to his relatives as well as gifts to close relatives as “a token of love.” Rani mentioned that she tried to give “best *shagun* gifts” during Rakhi to her sisters-in-law so that they may never think that their brother did not send money for them after migration. Similarly, Kajal mentioned that she must give big *shagun* (money gift) for her niece’s during wedding; “after all, I am ‘*Mami*’ (Maternal Aunty).” In Kajal’s case, the relationship is a kind of obligation that I showed in figure 2. The migrant brother has a family obligation towards a wedding off his niece. Therefore, Kajal is fulfilling that obligation by providing big *Shagun*.



Within kinship norms there is the concept of *bhaichara* (brotherhood/ relatives) and it is almost mandatory to maintain *izzat* or honour via giving gifts to their relatives on occasion. Gurpreet mentioned that when her husband’s grandmother passed away, her husband sent additional money to pay for the rituals for the death ceremony that is called '*Barha*.' Besides that, an

elaborate meal, and *shagun* (gifts in clothing and money form) were offered to relatives. It is evident that family members and migrants dutifully try to offer the best gifts to their extended kins. Thus, *shagun*, from the sender's stand point, expresses an emotional bond (Mckenzie and Menjivar, 2011) that migrants feel since they are the family members who are away and they wish to maintain those kinship ties (Kaur, 2019).

Remittances as 'Care Money': Usually, remittances are sent for household consumption but a part of the remittances also include care money whereby money is sent to loved ones for their care as a loving gesture. Singh et al. (2010) have demonstrated how remittances are also used by migrant families as a care economy. Sending money home is a way to make their bond strong with their families and a way to show care towards their loved ones by migrants. In various ways, the sender of the money interprets his/ her emotions beyond financial needs (Singh and Cabraal, 2013). Singh et al. (2012) also point out that sending remittances and gifts to loved ones and families in the home countries is valued as a medium of care rather than the care provided by being physically present.

During my discussion on remittances with Punjabi families in The Netherlands, Gubaksh said that he would send money to his mother and younger brother every month, even though his father owned agricultural land and had a handsome income. But the additional remittance is to show his care for his mother. Similarly, Avtar Singh, a migrant in the Gulf, also mentioned that he used to send a major share of his wages to his wife and children so that they could "lead a good life."

Generally, in India or Punjab after the wedding of a daughter, she is seen as a member of the in-law's family. Her parents do not accept money from her. However, Harpinder from the Netherlands stated that she would sometimes send money to her parental house "for care and love." Similarly, Harpreet mentioned that her mother was a working woman in The Netherlands and earned her own income. Sometimes her mother would also send money to her parental family. She mentioned that her mom is more concerned about Nani (maternal grandmother) because she is old and sick. So, mom does this "for the sake of care".

In the Indian patriarchal structure, daughters are perceived as *paraya dhan*; that is, they have to leave their parental home and become member of their husband's family and home. *Kanyādāna* (literally means giving away of the daughter) is considered to be a sacrament in which the daughter is 'given away' to the groom's house. From then onwards, she becomes part of her in-law's family and the parents would not accept any gifts or monetary support from her. This continues to be a widely held belief across rural and even urban communities in many parts of South Asian societies. In such a scenario, males remain the breadwinners of the family. They control the 'public sphere' and take all financial decisions in the family. Females operating in the 'private' sphere are responsible for household chores, family care, and so forth. They are often socially restricted and their physical mobility outside the home is also controlled (Kaur, 2017).

However, in the case of Hapinder and Harpreet's mother, as they became economically independent, it created room for independent decisions –including financial ones. Such examples are growing among the communities, these help to break the stereotypes that daughters are 'paraya dhan' over whom their husbands have full control.

Remittances for Education: The lion's share of the remittances is invested in family consumption, and migrants usually send money according to the family budget. However, one



share of remittances is always sent for children's education (Kaur, 2016). Remittances are used to provide better education to left-behind children. The Gulf migrants usually try to send remittances to educate children and, in some cases, younger siblings. Changing trends show that money is also being invested in the education of daughters with particular emphasis being given to professional education for daughters (Hadi, 2001). I explored this theme during my fieldwork in rural Punjab (2017-20) and found that labour migrants are increasingly investing in providing better education to their children to ensure a bright future for them.

International exposure to the countries in which they live enhances the way migrants value education. Even the left behind wives I interviewed expressed a keen desire to get “a good education” for their children. For example, Harjinder mentioned that her husband was working rigorously and sometimes doing extra hours for the sake of the children. Therefore, she too wanted the children to acquire a good education. Jaswinder Singh, who I interviewed in the Netherlands said that he felt that computers were a new and necessary skill that would open opportunities for rural youth in Punjab for jobs as computer operators, account maintainers etc. With this in mind, he had established a small computer training centre in his village charging minimal fees for boys and completely free for girls! He said, “I want my village children to have modern education according to the times... I pay the entire maintenance cost. My brother is taking care of the shop and computers. All the money is sent by me”.

It is common among Punjabi communities to maintain extended family relations and a sense of belongingness for their Miti/ motherland. Similarly, in Jaswinder case, I found that he was sending remittances, not just to his family, but opening up opportunities for children in the entire village with a clear purpose of bettering the lives of his community. The motive behind the community interest is complex and sending remittances for the welfare of the community is more inclined toward religious ideas of giving without self-interest (Singh et al., 2012).

Sending Remittances for Migration: People from developing countries are widely drawn to the prospect of migration to developed countries. They dream of a beautiful and prosperous life for themselves and their families whom they have left behind. This motivates them and they search for suitable employment opportunities, better economic return and an increase in the standard of living which remains the main push-pull factor in migrant families (Akesson, 2009; Eversole, 2005; Lubkemann, 2005; Stodolska and Santos, 2006).

During the fieldwork survey in Punjab, we found trends of ‘generational migration’ in migrant families. The age group of 30 - 40 years migrant family members also become role models for the generation that follows. While growing up, children observe the success of their kin, father, and siblings as migrants and this attracts them to follow similar trajectories. In other words, remittances also energise migration decisions (Cohen and Sirkeci, 2012). Secondly, since migrants also believe that they were able to improve their lives through migration, they are ready to invest in their younger generation's migration. Thus, in the villages, I surveyed and found that there is a “culture of migration”. This culture has become a norm among many villages and communities. It is seen almost as a ritual and a stepping-stone towards upward socio-economic mobility (Massey et al., 1993).

One of the respondents, Gurjeet mentioned that after years of her husband being a migrant who had been remitting money home, she was now ready to send her son to Canada for higher studies so that they could ensure a bright future for him and he could possibly settle in Canada permanently. There is also a growing trend among some families to help daughters to

migrate to developed countries. In some cases, not only the fathers but also paternal and maternal uncles support such sponsorships to help nieces and nephews migrate. For example, Lakhwinder mentioned that her husband was a migrant in Dubai and her brother was in Australia. Her daughter, therefore, had always ‘dreamt of migration’ as a way to make her future better. So, the uncle sent the sponsorship and the father paid the expenses. When Lakhwinder talked to us, her daughter had been in Australia already for five years!

Remittance as Investments: In macro terms, remittances and the resultant investments also support national development by increasing the wealth of the nation. However, in this paper, I am more interested in understanding the micro aspects of remittance which create bridges between migrants and non-migrant families. The concept of pure altruism and a sense of belongingness do motivate the migrant to remit back to their families (Lucas and Stark, 1988; Sana and Massey, 2005). Studies have emphasized that migrants usually spend money to open small businesses and entrepreneurial activities in their home countries (Kakhkharov, 2018; Zheng and Musteen, 2018). In this way, remittances are utilized to establish small entrepreneurial businesses to boost family income in emigrant families (Mandelman and Shapiro, 2014). Even in Gulati's (1983) study in the state of Kerala (South India), she found that migrants invested money in opening small businesses and women's entrepreneurial activities.

In the case of our respondents who are mostly of rural origins and are known as ‘sons of the soil’, there is a strong bond with their land (*Vatna di mitti*), *Miti di Kushboo* (love for motherland), which occurs in films and popular culture. Thus, remittances also offer an expression of this love of the land, of kinship and ‘belonging’. In Punjab when land is purchased it greatly enhances ‘izzat’ and honour. Thus, remittances are also invested in buying land in Punjab. Similarly, constructing a house is also a way of showing the success story of the migrant. We found these houses fascinating. Many of them stand out because they are decorated with aeroplanes and football water tanks on the roof to symbolize a strong connection with the family. Sometimes the name of the destination country is carved on the door of the house beside the name of the migrant whose house it is! Such houses are easily visible in the village of the Doaba region in Punjab. Ram, our respondent in the Netherlands showed me a picture of his house with great pride. He has a big house in a village in Punjab. It is named after the country of his migration: “Holland House.”

Taylor and Singh (2013) have pointed out that constructing big houses in their homeland portrays migrants’ success stories in the place of migration which is common in the case of Punjabi. Similarly in Pakistan construction of houses and purchasing of land after migration become a status symbol and maintain respect in villages (Erdal, 2012)

Development Remittances: Remittances are generally not sent on from a profit-making objective but because of the emotional bond migrants share with their country of origin and the attachment with their motherland. Studies have mentioned the utilization of remittances in economic points that include money sent for health care, family budgets, savings, and education. From a macro point of view, remittances help the country’s development and increase foreign reserves. From a micro point of view, remittances are utilized for village development. Often, migrants and diasporic communities send remittances to construct religious places, roads, community halls, and philanthropic work (Dusenbury and Tatla, 2009).



The migrant's attachment to his village compels him to send money to develop his native places. During my visit to the Doaba region, I found a newly constructed school in a village. After a discussion with returnee migrants, I discovered that village NRIs (Non-resident Indians) have an NGO (non-governmental organization) for the development of the village. This NGO and village community contribute money for a better school in the village. Gyani (a returnee migrant) mentioned that the school has been constructed with the help of NRIs (Non-resident Indians) and that they have been trying to follow the model of foreign education at the school. All the electricity was from solar energy. The school had cemented playgrounds and separate bathrooms for girls and boys. Even laboratories for science and computers had been provided.

Remittances are also used for building religious places-- gurudwaras and temples in the village. This reflects some of the caste segregation that are followed by many communities in India. In many cases, I observed separate caste-based gurudwaras constructed in villages to maintain identity and Honour. Sometimes, different caste groups constructed more than one gurudwara within the village after getting funding from village migrants. For example, in the village of Akhara, two gurudwaras belong to the higher caste Jat, and the other one, Ravidass gurudwara, belongs to the scheduled caste. This caste-based differentiation was also visible in the community after migration. In the Netherlands, I saw that the main Gurudwara is called Gurudwara Singh Sabha and the scheduled caste gurudwara, i.e., Shri Guru Ravidass Ji Temple. In fact, such separation on the basis of caste is against Sikh principles because Sikhism believes in an egalitarian religious space. In principle, Sikhism is anti-caste. The '*langar pratha*' (lunch ritual) in gurudwara is a symbol of maintaining equality in all castes and classes. Sikhism draws from other faiths especially the Bhakti saints such as Sant Kabir and Sant Ravidas, who came from lower strata of the caste hierarchy. However, in practice, caste-based discrimination continues and higher castes usually maintain distance from lower castes. Ironically, these caste-based discriminations are still rigid even after migration and many migrants maintain that sense of belongingness with their caste. This explains the resultant growth of separate gurudwaras in the same place. Sometimes, members from the lower caste who have prospered after migration attempt to assert their own status by spending on the construction of their own Gurudwaras.

Social Remittances: Levitt (2001) has defined social remittances as ideas that inspire migrants to bring items to their home country when they visit. In addition to that, sometimes migrants and their families might enjoy wearing t-shirts with the country flag where the migrants live. Sometimes these flags might also be used to decorate the migrant's family home or even their motorcycles. Visual signs in villages also reflect the migration trends in a village—for example houses of migrants may sometimes replicate designs from western homes! This form of using cultural symbols is included in Levitt and Taylor and Singh's (2013) definition of social remittances. Sometimes easing women's mobility and enhancement of their decision-making role is also a social outcome of migration. Rajbir mentioned that her husband had no issue being her representation in family gatherings, decision making and even handling agricultural land. He mentioned that in his place of work, many women are working and managing their homes also. So, her husband said better to be independent than relying on someone.

During research in the Netherlands, I found communities following Punjabi culture even after migration, especially in modes of dress. Wearing suit-salwar (Punjabi dress for girls) and Kurta

-Pajama (traditional dress for boys), learning of Punjabi language and ethnic songs, and lastly following Punjabi styles at weddings were all common. Many young girls I met in the Netherlands, love to call themselves Punjabi and feel a sense of pride in their belonging to Punjab and their language Punjabi.

Conclusion:

The remittances sent to left-behind families in Punjab generally reflect their emotional bonds—not just with their families but with their motherland. After migration, that bond becomes more intense, and they try to remit in different forms. The sense of belongingness is a very important reason for sending remittances. The Punjabi diaspora in the Netherlands generally maintains land holdings and sends money for philanthropic work, thereby demonstrating their ‘belongingness’ to the motherland. Further, the money is usually sent as remittance to show their presence and maintain relationships with their extended families. Another reason is that migrants want to maintain their identity of being money providers and maintain a special place in the family and the community. Caste identity also plays a significant role. The nexus between the higher (*Jat*) caste, a land owning caste, and the lower (*Dalit*) caste, the labour caste on *Jat* land holding, become more intense after migration. Both castes attempt to maintain their identity at the village level by constructing religious places and big dwellings. Thus, the remittances studied in economic terms, in fact, have multiple additional meanings and underlying reasons when we study them from both sender’s and receiver’s points of view.

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