

## SOCIO-CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS ISSUES FACED BY PAKISTANI MIGRANTS IN SPAIN

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### ABSTRACT

*The study focuses on the socio-cultural and religious issues faced by Pakistani migrants living in Spain. The main research objectives were to explore the initial issues faced by migrants in Spain, the socio-cultural and religious challenges faced by Pakistani migrants in Spain and the way Pakistani migrants ensure their own cultural identity. The qualitative research design based on an interpretive school of thought was used. By using purposive sampling method, in-depth interviews were conducted with 15 Pakistani migrants. With the help of thematic analysis, the data was analyzed. Some major themes derive from analysis were socioeconomic issue a prime reason of migration, language a big barrier in settling down to the community, residential issues faced by Pakistani migrants in Spain, religious bias and discrimination towards Pakistani migrants, social bias and cultural issues faced by Pakistani children at school. The study concluded that Pakistani migrants face socio-cultural and religious discrimination and were in a struggle to maintain their own cultural identity.*

**Keywords:** Migration, Europe and Spain, Pakistani Migrants, Socio-cultural and religious challenges, language barriers, Culture differences, Living style.

### INTRODUCTION

Throughout history, migration has been seen as a change in the economic situation of not only an individual but of the country as well. According to United Nations estimates (2020) about 281 million people migrate yearly from their homeland to other countries. As per the definition “Migration is the movement of some people for economic purposes or to join their family, while other moves to avoid war conflict, terrorism, climate change or due to natural disasters, etc.” (United Nations, 2021). People migrate from their homeland to another region due to different factors that include pull and push factors. Pull factors are those factors that attract other people to migrate to a new country, for example, job opportunities, health facilities, better education facilities, Higher living standards, better public services, and freedom of expression, etc. Whereas push factors are the opposite of pull factors, push factors compell people to leave the region due to a lack of job opportunities, absence of good educational institutes, poor medical care, poverty, famine or drought, war, political conflicts, etc. (Galang, 2022). In either case, migration occurs and people are migrated to a new destination for better opportunities.

In recent years, a large number of people migrated to Europe due to socio-political, demographic, economic, and environmental factors (European Parliament, 2020). According to Eurostat, in 2020, 1.9 million immigrants entered European states from other continents (Eurostat, 2022). According to the 2020 International Migrant Stock compiled by UNDESA, the number of Pakistani migrants was 952,993, out of which 58% were males and 42% were females (International Migrant Stock, 2020). Moreover, Pakistani migrants only in Spain were 63,819 which included 65 % males and 35% females (Pakistani Nationals in Europe, 2021).

Spain has recently become an attractive destination for many people worldwide (Saleem, 2020). Pakistanis migrate to Europe in search of better life opportunities. They leave their homeland due to economic factors, low living standards, fewer job opportunities, security issues, inadequate education facilities, or to join their already settled family. Andreas Schloenhardt mentioned in Asim Saleem's

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(2020) article that “there are complex causes, including factors specific to Pakistan, such as low economic development, threats to security, frequently occurring natural disasters, and political instability. Furthermore, Pakistanis already have a big community living in abroad, and their families living in Pakistan wish to join them.” But when they migrate to a new country, they face numerous challenges like language barriers, discrimination, cultural and religious difficulties, housing issue, educational and employment challenges (NYS-IA, 2020).

Even though right now, the number of Pakistanis living in Spain has immensely risen due to Spain being famous for multiculturalism. The number of people migrating to Spain from 1947-1970 was low. The first People to relocate to Barcelona, Spain, in 1970 were Gujaratis. After losing their jobs in other European countries, they came to Spain to work in coal mines or factories. After settling in this new country, they would call their brothers, cousins, or other relatives to Spain (Ballesteros, 2017). And in this way, the migration of Pakistanis to Spain gradually increased.

At that time, they faced numerous challenges due to their language, culture, dress, and religion; for being the first Pakistanis in a new country and few or no people could speak English or Spanish (Ballesteros, 2017). There were few *halal* food shops and few mosques to perform Prayers. But with time, these hurdles decreased as Pakistani immigrants started to rise, but even now, they are still facing the challenges proposed by the socio-culture and religious constraints in Spain. Culture and religion profoundly impact one's life, so when people migrate to a new country or territory, they face many problems due to socio-cultural and religious factors. To fit in and function properly as a segment of a large population, they must learn new norms and values of the host country. Which sometimes causes conflict as people hold their culture and religious values dearly and cannot exchange them. The same goes for Pakistani migrants in Spain. It is a given fact like every other person, Pakistani hold their socio-cultural and religious values dear as well, and these values are embedded in their mindset. Residing in a new place may lead to cultural shock and a challenge to sustain the existing values and norms. So this research aimed at finding out the social, cultural, and religious issue faced by Pakistanis migrants in Spain.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Migration can be permanent or temporary. It can be internal or external. And the people who move from their habitual place to another residence place due to a job or any other reasons are called migrants (United Nations, 2021). Many people leave their cities or countries to find better living conditions. Migration theories seek to find the reason why some people choose to leave their homes, villages, or countries to settle for other homes, villages, cities, or countries (Bueno et al., 2019).

George Ernst Ravenstein introduced laws on migration based on his observations of Europe and the UK in 1885. He explained economic causes are the main reasons that people migrate from one place to another. Furthermore, he said, females tend to migrate more than males in short distances meanwhile men migrate more over long distances. People from rural areas are more prone to migrate than those who live in cities, etc. But some of these theories are not applicable these days, for instance, nowadays a large number of women migrate over long distances as well for study purposes or for job issues (Ravenstein, 1885; Kunaka, 2020)-

Duncan's theory was developed in 1940 by Otis Durant Duncan, in his book called “The Theory and Consequences of Mobility of Farm Population.” According to him, to achieve social change and structural aims migration is the functional alternative. His theory is a combination of microscopic and macroscopic factors that causes migration. According to him, migration takes place due to the following factors: economic and technical causes, social causes, personal causes, natural causes, and other causes like labor problems, strikes, riots, etc (Duncan, 1940; Divisha, 2016).

Everett Lee introduced his migration model in 1966 based on push and pull factors that explained the causes of emigration and immigration. According to Lee people tend to migrate to due negative or positive factors. Negative factors are the push factors that force a person to leave his or her home, village, city, or country e.g, poverty, natural calamities, war, etc. Whereas Pull factors are the positive aspects of one region that attract the person towards another country, e.g that could be a good economy, higher living standards, good job opportunities, etc. Last but not least, the obstacles that come between the push and the pull factors are called intervening obstacles and those can be in form of mountains, valleys, cost of traveling, economic barriers, socio-cultural and religious barriers, or political barriers, etc (Lee, 1966; Mary, 2021).

According to The new economics of migration and belief by many authors like Stark and bloom(1985), Katz and Stark (1986), and Taylor (1986), people migrate to manage the risk factors and overcome market failure. In this type of migration people do not leave their country permanently they come and leave as they wish. That is why this model also predicts circular migration. The economic pressure in their homeland causes people to migrate.Hence this theory claims that for people to migrate internationally nowadays wage differential is not a necessary condition, and peoples homeland economic developmentt conditions causes them to migrate.

Hence according to the above theories, most people migrate due to push factors of their homeland, like fewer economic opportunities, poverty, political issues, bad health care providence, fewer education facilities, personal preferences of settling in other countries, natural disasters, or war. And mostly people choose those countries to settle in which provide them with the best opportunities for them or are easier to travel to. For example, people like to migrate to those countries which attract them with a better economic situation, job opportunities, high standard education system, stability on a political level, better health facilities, etc.

### **Migration and Europe**

Throughout history, Europe has always been the most attractive spot for people to migrate from around the world. In the 1950s intra-regional migration of refugees and displaced people took place due to world war II . Then, after some time, the end of guest worker programs made immigrants take permanent settlements in Europe, especially from Turkey and Africa. And in the 1990s-2010 when the European regime facilitated the movement of high and low-skilled workers it caused the movement of people from Central and Eastern Europe to Western and Southern Europe and from Africa and Latin America(Santamaria et al., 2021). Thus Europe has always pulled migrants from around the world or from within Europe to migrate as it always attracted people due to its provision of Border openness, employment opportunities, and cultural openness( Hager, 2021).

### **Pakistanis Migration to Europe**

People from around the world migrate to Europe, especially to Spain. Because the cost of living in Spain is affordable, there are high job opportunities, good provision of the health care system, and easy accessibility to the transportation system(International Citizens Group, 2021). People are welcoming and last but not least, Spain’s warm weather draws the attention of tourists and those who want to emigrate (Fernandez, 2022). Pakistanis can be seen noticeably in migrating people from worldwide to Europe. According to the Ministry of overseas Pakistani (2017), about 8.84 million people are living outside of Pakistan; from which about 2.12 million Pakistanis reside in Europe. Pakistanis migrate externally especially, people from rural areas because it is seen as changing the economic situation of not only a person but of the family(Jabeen et al., 2017). The Pakistanis that leave their country are the ones who discern better life opportunities as they find difficulties in fulfilling their need in their homeland. High unemployment, fewer economic opportunities, safety and security issues, low standard of living, inadequate health and educational facilities, and joining their settled family in Spain are common factors that cause them to leave. Hence the first Pakistanis migrated to Spain in 70s as a replacement to other European countries where laws in migration were stricter. The second wave was in the 80s and 90s when families started to come. But at that time, they still counted as the minority, and the third wave was in the 2000s when numerous Pakistanis immigrated to Spain(Axmacher, 2007-2017).

But after arriving in Spain, Pakistani Migrants face many new challenges, whether they are cultural or religious. NYS-IA (2020) mentions in their article, “Even settled migrants face many challenges due to cultural and communication skills; this can include social traditions or even more complex issues like religion.” The second hurdle Pakistani migrants find is language barriers that can cause them to isolate themselves from the locals, which causes limitations in communication with other people. According to Lloyd (2021), “Language barriers can prevent communication with the locals on a daily basis; and can limit access to necessary services that are sometimes unavailable to refugees, especially those who don't know how to read and write the Latin alphabet or have low literacy levels even in their native language.” The other hurdles they find are difficulties due to lack of education, knowledge, language, and discrimination (ENAR European Network against Racism, 2015-2016).

Pakistani Migrants constantly face problems in raising their children as they don’t know how to manage the teaching of their own culture and religious practice to their children while living in foreign countries. And on the other hand, children find difficulty in learning and understanding two

cultures, as at home, they learn their parent's culture, and outside of the house, they learn the host country's culture. Therefore, getting caught in two cultures can cause internal conflicts. Thus, this research intended to determine the social, cultural, and religious challenges faced by Pakistani migrants in Spain. Through this research, people would be able to know the challenges faced by Pakistanis and how they overcame these challenges. This research wanted to provide new insights into how Pakistani teach their children Pakistani culture and religion while living in Spain and the cultural and religious problems faced by Pakistani children at school.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The main objectives of this study were:

- To find out the initial problems faced by the Pakistani Migrants in Spain.
- To discover the socio-cultural and religious issues faced by the Pakistani community.
- To find out, how are Pakistani migrants teaching their children their culture, language, and Islamic practices.

### **Research Questions :**

- ❖ What problems are Pakistani children facing at school due to culture and religion?
- ❖ Are Pakistanis doing something to normalize their culture in Spain?
- ❖ Are they actively taking part in cultural and religious gatherings in Spain?

## **METHODOLOGY**

The researcher has used a qualitative research method based on an interpretive school of thought. For Primary data collection, in-depth interviews were conducted from Pakistani migrants. Interviews were conducted with 15 Pakistani migrants living in Barcelona, Spain. The researchers used the purposive sampling technique to conduct in-depth interviews with only Pakistani migrants. The inclusion criteria to conduct interviews with participants were that migrants should be living in Spain for at least three years, and they should be living with their families, last but not least they should hold legal residence. Whereas, exclusion criteria were that Migrants living less than three years were not eligible, and migrants living individually/without families were not considered suitable for the interview, lastly, migrants without residence cards were not eligible. Furthermore, to carry out the primary data collection, the researcher used an interview guide. The interview guide consisted of 13 open-ended questions related to socio-cultural and religious problems faced by Pakistani migrants and their children; including reasons for migration, initial problems as migrants and racism, etc. Some Interviews were conducted through telephone calls, and some were conducted face-to-face. The duration of conduction of the interviews varied from 40 to 50 minutes. For demographic data collection, the researcher asked for the Participants' age, gender, occupation, marital status, number of children, and years living in Spain.

### **Data Analysis**

For data analysis, transcriptions, and translations of in-depth interviews were done to carry out the thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is the procedure to identify the repeated patterns or themes of given qualitative data, it can apply to texts, like interviews or transcriptions (Caulfield, 2019). Therefore, to carry out the thematic analysis, the researcher carefully highlighted the text from transcribed interviews to develop codes to describe the content. After the coding was done the researcher identified the pattern of the codes to generate the themes; after reviewing the themes the result was written down. Lastly, the conclusion was drawn after compiling results and intensive discussion and evaluations.

### **Ethical Considerations**

Participants' permissions were taken before carrying out the interviews. Moreover, the purpose of the research was explained to the research participants. The participants were not asked for their names. Furthermore, they were asked to inform if they felt uncomfortable during the interview. Lastly, participants were not forced to answer any questions on which they felt uncomfortable, and it was ensured that their data would be secured.

## **RESULTS**

### **Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents**

A total of 15 respondents participated in the study. Out of 15 respondents, five were male, and ten were female. The age range of respondents was 32 to 62 years. All of the respondents were married. Out of the 15 respondents, ten were housewives, three were business owners, one salesperson, one was retired and was on a pension. The number of children of the respondents was from 2 to 5 children.

### **Socio-economic Issue: a prime Reason of Migration**

The study found that men usually migrate and leave Pakistan as most want to improve their economic situation and provide every facility to their families, But usually, women migrate to Spain from Pakistan, as their husbands or fathers are already settled in Spain and called them. But few people settled down in Spain because they liked the atmosphere of Spain when visiting it as tourists, or few couldn't go back to Pakistan due to family members' pressure already residing in Spain and decided to settle in Spain permanently. As one of the respondents said, *"Firstly, the main reason was just to tour Spain after our wedding but my husband's uncle who was living here, wanted us to stay here with him as he invited us to Spain. Then I became pregnant, and his uncle insisted that we should have our baby here. In this way, our stay gradually increased, and in the end, we settled here."*

Some of the other responses were:

*"My husband came to Spain for the due job and to start a business as he does not have any business or job in Pakistan. After 7 years he called me and my children to Spain."*

*"The reason was our father as he was already in Spain so he called me, my mother, and my brother in Spain as well."*

*"I came to Spain for better job opportunities, I wanted to work hard for my children so I could provide them with everything."*

Hence, according to the study, most of the Pakistanis migrated due to better job opportunities as they wanted to improve their financial situation or their family member invited them on a family visa. Meanwhile, fewer settle down in Spain they couldn't go back.

### **Language a Big Barrier in settling down to the community**

Pakistani migrants face many problems when they arrive in Spain. And the major problem all of the respondents faced was the language barrier. They met problems due to language in jobs; as one of the respondents said, *"The first problem I faced was the language barrier, and because at that time I could not speak Spanish, I got fired from my job at the restaurant, and for the time being, I couldn't find any jobs. I had to work at Pakistani shops on a low salary until I learned Spanish."* When they migrate to Spain, many cannot help their family financially or continue their study due to language; one of the respondents said, *"The major problem here is cross-language. I am a software engineer. I came here, leaving my huge career in Pakistan. And I couldn't pursue it after coming here due to the lack of language."*

Not only this, Pakistani people, especially women, have to face problems due to language in hospitals as they cannot speak Spanish, and most hospitals do not provide the facility of translators. In that case, they have to bring their husbands, making them take leave from their jobs. Regarding this issue, a participant said, *"Whenever I had to visit the hospital, I had to make my husband take the day off from work so that he could accompany me."*

Whereas, when children join schools, they can't speak Spanish and Catalan. So, they face problems during the early stages due to language. Therefore study found that many problems faced by Pakistanis in Spain are due to the language barrier as they find difficulties in day-to-day tasks because of not having familiarity with the Spanish language.

### **Socio-economic and residential issues faced by Pakistani Migrants in Spain**

The study has found that Pakistanis face problems due to increased inflation over the past few years. Though the reason of migration was to capture better economic opportunity however the workers' pay has not improved much, but the expenses have increased tremendously. As one of the respondents said, *"In 2005, we could buy lots of things or do lots of shopping for 50€, but now in 2022, we can buy only two to three items for 50€. There is left no value of 50€. The only visible issue that inflation has raised. Electricity, water, and gas everything has become expensive."* One of the other respondents said, *"Things have become expensive when we came our house spending budget was 300€, but now it has increased to 700€."*

Another issue that Pakistani migrants face is that the procedure for renting a house has become complex and expensive. Now, if people want to rent an apartment, they must pay 3 to four rent in advance. As one of the respondents said, *"Housing has become expensive, and procedures for getting rental houses are becoming difficult day by day. People are wary of renting houses to Pakistanis."* Resultantly, many Pakistani migrants are facing problems due to increased inflation in Spain they said the workers' pays are the same as before but expenses have been increased.

### **Religious bias and Discrimination towards Pakistani Migrants**

As Spain is known for multiculturalism, and the People of Spain are very open-minded toward other people's cultures. Pakistanis wear Shalwar kameez freely; they eat whatever they want and live as they wish. However, some Pakistani who live far from the city or where there are fewer Pakistanis and have no Pakistani shops; do face problems as they don't have any Pakistani families to get together to celebrate cultural festivals; also, they don't have access to Pakistani restaurants. And to buy Pakistani food, they have to go to the city. As one of the respondents said, *"There are not many problems I am facing right now except that I live far from Barcelona in a rural town, and to buy Pakistani products, I have to go to Barcelona. The Pakistani shops which offer a great range of products are only available in big cities. The halal and Pakistani products are a little expensive but not too much; the same goes for halal meat."*

Hence, Study found that most Pakistanis who live in big cities can enjoy Pakistani culture; cuisine, and products due to the bigger Pakistani population settling in cities; Whereas Pakistani who are residing in the outskirts face problems in approaching Pakistani products, food, and other Pakistanis. According to the study findings, there are some problems for Pakistanis in Spain due to religion, like people can't give Adhan on loudspeakers. As one of the respondents said, *"We can't give Adhan on loudspeaker. And whereas people listen to music so loud in our building that we can't hear our voices."* They faced problems due to of few mosques where they could perform prayers. Most of them only went to mosques on Friday to offer Jumma as mosques were far from their homes. One respondent said, *"The mosques were built in cities, except they were far away, so I only went to the mosque to offer Jumma on Fridays."* So, Mosques are built but are not constructed everywhere, and people sometimes find it hard to change their apartments as they don't want to go far from mosques. Regarding this, one of the respondents said, *"We can't even make the mosques where we want because of the permission issues. That is why people try to find houses near mosques, even me; I am not changing my house because the mosque is near to my house here."*

Another religious issue that the majority of the respondents said was that there is no Holiday on religious festivals like Eid days; people and children have to go to work and school on Eid days. Respondents said regarding this issue, *"No, there is no holiday on the Eid days here. We make our children take a day off, but otherwise, there is no holiday. But we have to go to work."* *"It is not a must for children to go to school even on Eid day. The school is not strict about that. But they must go to school if they have any exams; otherwise, they take the day off."*

Women said they sometimes face people's objectives due to the hijab. One respondent said, *"few people occasionally ask why we do hijab even in the hot weather. Even someone asked us today about hijab, but we said that we do hijab due to our religion."*

Most of the participants (8 out of 15) said; the problem that we are facing or faced in the past due to religion is because of less communication with locals; People here like to listen; if you tell them your problem that, you can't do something due to your religion, they will understand and respect your choice. As one participant said, *"The rejection of the religion was only due to ignorance. Because "en la Cultura occidental todo lo que es desconocido da miedo (In western culture, everything unknown is scary)."*

According to the study, local people treat Pakistani migrants well but sometimes they have to face racism or discrimination due to their culture or religion; like in their hijabs or full clothing; one of the respondents said, *"People objected to our hijab and dupattas; some people liked it, and some people showed a harsh attitude towards us saying "Mucho Calor, Mucho Calor ( too hot, too hot);" they would fan themselves with their hands to show they are feeling hot to see us even when they weren't. Because there are all types of people, some like and some dislikes the "Extranjeros (Forneigrs)."*

Moreover, many respondents said they sometimes faced harsh glances from people on buses, on the metro, and in other places; they said they could perceive the hate in people's eyes for being Muslims and not Pakistanis. According to the study, Pakistani migrants occasionally face racism not

because they are Pakistani but for being Muslim. Some of them said that after the 2017 incident on the La Rambla<sup>2</sup>, they could feel the change in some people's attitudes towards them, but the government and officials handled that incident very well.

One of the respondents said, *"A few years ago, there was a problem with a terrorist attack on La Rambla, Barcelona; at that time, we did feel the gazes of people seeing us differently than before, but with time everyone forgot. But sometimes we do feel mental torture on the bus or the metro but overall no."*

The research found the worry of people for the long term, they said now things are good, but they don't know what will happen in the future as recently there were a few incidents which were not very favorable. And the rise of an anti-Islamic political party is making people worry. Pakistani migrants are worried, especially; for the next generation who will live here for a long time.

### **Social Bias and Cultural issues faced by Pakistani children at school**

Some issues are concerning to parents, in some schools, children have to attend mandatory swimming classes in third grade; if they don't attend these classes, their marks will be subtracted. According to parents here, the issue is not about joining the swimming class; it is that the swimming classes are co, and parents are reluctant to send their daughters to swim with boys due to religious and cultural demands. According to them, if the school can provide some other activity for children who cannot join swimming classes due to religion and culture or if they can't do this at least they should separate the boys and girls during swimming classes so that children don't fail in that activity, Because most of the parents were eager to teach their children to swim. One of the participants said, *"I didn't send my daughter to swimming class as she had to wear a swimming dress and in the swimming classes, there were boys as well. So her points were deducted as she didn't join the swimming classes."*

Another issue they told was that when their daughters starts doing hijab at school, they had to face some problems as other children teased them at school for doing hijab, and some teachers think that girls have started doing hijab due to pressure from their parents. One of them said, *"When my daughter started doing hijab, then some teachers did think that she started doing hijab because her parents forced her to do so. They did ask one or two times about this, and they even told our daughter that she can tell them personally without the presence of her parents that we are forcing her or not."*

One of the participants told about an incident of bullying with their daughter; she said, *"My daughter has lived frustrated for 2 to 3 years in school. We were unable to understand the cause of it, and even we are now as well. Was it a cross-religious or cross-cultural issue, or just some kids like to be dominant over other kids? Some months, kids behaved well with her, and then after making a fuss about some minor issue, other girls started misbehaving with her and cornered her. When my daughter came with us to Spain, she was only three years old. She asked me, "why do kids do that, and why do they always corner me." Where did they learn this? The school does not promote this behavior. We had complained about this issue in school and asked them to find the cause of why children behave in this manner with her. Honestly, I found some teachers have taken this issue seriously while some tried to blame us."*

According to the study findings, children face problems at school due to culture or religion, some tell their parents about what they are facing at school, and some may like to keep quiet.

### **Spanish educational system and Alternatives adopted by parents**

As per the study, Almost all the participants said that the Spanish educational system itself is not threatening as there is nothing that can harm Pakistani culture and religion in the syllabus. It is natural for them to teach only about their culture and religion as it is their country. But according to them, it is threatening that there is nothing about Islamic education at school, and the school time is very long. Most of them said that most migrants do not even know that children are being taught catholicism at school. And Some of them showed concern that as Spanish and Pakistani cultures are very different from each other, children sometimes get confused about what is right and what is wrong as they learn different things at school than at home. As one respondent said, *"when they learn things at home differently than in school; things get mixed in their minds, and they question what is wrong and right."*

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<sup>2</sup> On 17 August 2017, a total of 16 people got killed and 140 people were injured due to a white van that drove on a crowd gathered on Barcelona's La Rambla boulevard, causing terror in people. Later the attacker flew in a stolen car killing the driver, and many hours later same gang's men stabbed the woman in the coastal town of Cambrils (Euronews, 2022). All six attackers were killed by the police, and two died due to the explosion in their workshop. <https://www.euronews.com/2022/08/17/spain-marks-five-years-since-terror-attacks-in-barcelona-and-cambrils>

*In this regard, the school should discuss with parents that they teach religion, so the parents who do not want to teach their children religion at school get informed accordingly.*”

All the participants said when one is living abroad; then the duty falls on the parents to teach their children about their culture and religion. If parents keep teaching their children about culture and religion, it does not matter where their child is studying. But if they don't teach their children about their culture and religion, then the Spanish educational system can threaten them as they will only learn what they will be taught at school.

As one of the participants said, *“Yes, it can be threatening for the children who follow and attract to Spanish culture and religion. But the children who get timely guidance from their parents in religion and culture; can never be threatened by the Spanish educational system.”*

Hence, the Spanish educational system is not threatening for those Pakistani children whose parents are constantly teaching them about their culture and religion at home. According to the study findings, Pakistani parents teach culture and religion at home or through online classes, mosques, or summer classes that teach culture, religion, and Urdu and English. Most of the participants(11 out of 15) said they teach their children about culture and religion by themselves and send their children to the mosque to learn The Quran. And many participants said that they send their children to summer campuses held by the Minhaj ul Quran, where their children learn about culture and religion and how to write and read Urdu and English. The responses of the respondents regarding this issue were:

*“Here we have our Islamic centers where we take our children on weekends to show them about our culture and religion. And in the summer vacation, we hold summer camps to teach children about Pakistani culture and religion.”*

*“We teach them through the mosque or at home. Like how we pray and in this way we fast in Ramadan etc.”*

*“I didn't change myself and did not follow Spanish culture. So, I am doing the same with my kids. I have strictly asked my children to speak only Urdu and Punjabi at home. I ask them to talk with me in these languages. I do pray, so I also ask my children to pray. I recite the Quran and make the children recite it as well. There is no Pakistani or religious education here at schools. So for this purpose, we have to try at home all by ourselves.”*

Therefore, the study found most Pakistani parents teach their children about Pakistani Culture and religion at home or they send their children to mosques. Not only this in summer most of the children attend summer campuses conducted by Pakistani Islamic centers; where children learn Urdu and English.

## **DISCUSSION**

The study's finding was mainly based on the socio-cultural and religious challenges faced by Pakistani migrants in Spain. With the help of the qualitative research method, the study found the difficulties faced by Pakistani migrants and how they cope with them. The study found that most Pakistani migrated to Spain, especially men, seeking job opportunities to improve their financial status. In contrast, women migrated as their husbands or father called them in Spain. Therefore, a large number of people are migrating to Europe due to Socio-political factors, demographic, economic, and environmental factors (European Parliament, 2020). Hence after migrating, they experience different problems due to travel distances, and cultural differences; furthermore, they found host countries' rules and regulations different from their country, and some face discrimination(Alexander, 2021).

The first objective of the research was the initial problems faced by Pakistani Migrants in Spain. The study found that almost every Pakistani migrant faced language barriers when migrating from Pakistan. It is a given fact that when one moves from one country to another, they have to face language barriers. Hence, when Pakistani migrants move to Spain, they were not familiar with the host country's language; therefore, they faced challenges due to language in finding jobs, communicating in hospitals, schools, public transportation, etc. Language challenges are some of the biggest hurdles in accessing resources and fitting into a new country(Alexander, 2021). And due to the language barrier, many found problems in healthcare facilities(Jaeger et al., 2019). The study found that the Pakistani migrants who migrated in the 90s and early 2000 had to face more problems adjusting as the Pakistani community was very small at that time. According to the statistics given by Ana Ballesteros (2017) by the Spanish Institute of National Statistics on her research, there were only 29000 Pakistanis in 2005 in Spain.



The study's second objective was to find Socio-cultural and religious issues faced by the Pakistani community in 2022. The social problems that Pakistani migrants face are due to the increase in inflation over the past few years. Moreover, house renting has become expensive, and its procedure has become difficult. According to Trading Economics (June 2022), covering statics from National Statistics Institute (INE): "Annual inflation rate of Spain has increased to 10.8% in June 2022 it was recorded as the highest inflation rate since 1985. Including the arose in the rates of transport, housing, food and non-alcoholic drinks, hotels, cafes, and restaurants"(Trading Economics, June 2022).

Whereas there are not many cultural issues that Pakistanis face in 2022, only those Pakistanis have to face challenges who live far from the city and don't have a Pakistani community around. Furthermore, according to the study, Pakistani migrants living here in Spain face no major problems due to religion. Respondents said that the people of Spain are cooperative and less racist than other European countries. But still, there are some problems like they can't give Adhan on loudspeaker, there are no holidays on Eid days, Mosques are built, but sometimes they are far away from people's homes; moreover, women have to face problems due to hijab as people point out why are they wearing hijab in hot weather, while other reasons for objecting hijab were their family forces them or they will look beautiful without hijab, etc. According to the study, Overall, the people of Spain are amiable and Pakistani migrants do not face racism or discrimination due to their culture or religion daily, and local people treat Pakistani migrants well. But occasionally, they face racism due to hijab or just being Muslim. The study found that some people face racism not because of being Pakistani but for being Muslim.

According to the study, a new finding in contrast to previous studies is, most Pakistani children do not face many problems at school due to culture or religion, according to Parents. Teachers at school are friendly and treat every child with love, whether Pakistani or Spanish. But they have to face some problems, especially girls, as they can't join mandatory swimming classes, or when they start doing hijab, some of the girls have to face teasing from classmates or concerns of teachers who think their families pressure them. Moreover, when Pakistani children start going to school, they are unfamiliar with Spanish and Catalan, so they also face a language barrier. The study found that most Pakistani parents do not know that in most schools, catholicism is taught to the children. It is a legal requirement in Spain that every public school in the country must teach Roman Catholicism, and If there are enough non-Catholic students, they can take classes in their religion or an alternative in ethics. But the bishops are furious that the prime minister, Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero, canceled a law that would have mandated religion classes and replaced it with new legislation that would keep religion classes optional. Pakistani parents, regarding this issue, are trying to teach their children culture and religion at home by themselves or through mosques. But sometimes children get confused when they learn about two cultures at home and school. Therefore NYS-IA(2020) acknowledges that getting caught in two cultures can cause internal conflicts.

Also, a new fact that the study found from previous studies is that most Pakistani do not take part in socio-cultural activities or festivals of Spain, or only their children take part till school level. Meanwhile, most Pakistanis participate in Pakistani cultural festivals organized by the Minhaj ul Quran or the Pakistani community. Last but not least, the study found that to normalize Pakistani culture, many Pakistanis not only personally invite locals to iftar, 14 august, eid parties, etc., but Pakistani organizations invite them as well.

## **CONCLUSION**

The study concluded that overall Pakistani migrants live in peace and are accessible to do whatever they want as Spanish people are open to new cultures, and are welcoming. But sometimes, Pakistani migrants face challenges regarding social culture and religion. The study concluded, that due to language barriers, Pakistani migrants find difficulty in finding jobs and communicating at hospitals, etc and children face problems due to language in early classes when they join the schools. Moreover, they do encounter some religious issues like they can't give Adhan on loudspeakers and don't have holidays on religious festivals(Eid days) Whereas, women sometimes face objections due to wearing the hijab. The study also concluded that Pakistani children often find themselves in conflict or confusion because of learning about two different cultures at home and at school. Not only this some kids also have to face bullying from other kids at school due to being migrants or just Muslim. Moreover, the study concluded that to maintain Pakistani culture in Spain not only do people individually invite Spanish people to their homes

at festivals and parties but also Pakistani organizations do as well. Lastly, people are not sure about their religious existence and economic sustainability in the Spain which may force them to come back or migrate to some other country of the region.

### Limitations of the study

The study was conducted only in one city. The second limitation was that there were more females than males, and women were all housewives, which limited the analysis to only their views. People can tell more about the outside if they are working and have relationships with different types of people on daily basis rather than the people who stay at home. Furthermore, there were only parents' views on school; if children are facing any problems in school due to culture and religion. It is suggested to include children's views and experiences on school life in future studies, as children are sometimes reluctant to tell their parents everything regarding school issues or bullying. In Pakistani people, especially girls, are scared that if they tell their parents about bullying, they might drop out of school.

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