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Unveiling the Shadows: Understanding Social and Demographic Awareness of Migrant Smuggling in Pakistan

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Abstract: Migration as a social issue has gained importance for the government and the people. Illegal migration has caused thousands of people to die due to unawareness of its consequences. Therefore, the present study highlights the socio-economic determinants of awareness of migrant smuggling by taking data from 660 people from Punjab, Pakistan. The paper has made use of descriptive analyses and ordered logit regression analysis to determine the awareness level. The findings of the study have found a significant impact of education, people living in urban areas, people from high social classes, frequency of information, and source of information from peer groups, social media and newsletters on the level of awareness. The study recommends that increasing the level of awareness requires an active role for state agencies and civil society. The government can make use of media, especially electronic media, to launch information campaigns and rapidly transfer knowledge to the general public.

Key Words: Migrant Smuggling, Illegal Migration, Order Logit, Pakistan

Introduction

Migrant smuggling refers to the illegal transportation of individuals across international borders with the intention of bypassing legal immigration routes and procedures. These individuals are often referred to as illegal immigrants, and the individuals or organizations involved in the smuggling are referred to as smugglers. Migrant smuggling is a global phenomenon that affects various countries around the world, with some of the most common locations for this activity including Asia, Africa, Central and South America. Migrant smuggling can be dangerous, as it often involves seedy, poorly equipped vessels or vehicles, and the individuals being smuggled may be subjected to violence, exploitation, or other forms of abuse. The practice is also prohibited by law in most countries around the world, and those found guilty of engaging in it can face steep fines, imprisonment, and other legal penalties.

The United Nations Office on Drug and Crime has defined migrant smuggling as follows: “Smuggling of migrants” shall mean the procurement, to obtain, directly or indirectly, financial or other material benefits, of the illegal entry of a person into a State Party of which the person is not a national or a permanent resident” (UNODC, 2004).

Migration as a social issue has been researched owing to its importance for the government's policy decision-making and the people of a country (Espenshade, 1994; Simon, 1985). The factors responsible for illegal migration are the absence of regular channels of migration (Breines et al., 2015), the problem faced by the people's visa application, an increase in the demand of illegally migrated people in the countries for low-wage employment (Triandafyllidou & Bartolini, 2020), social networks of the migrants in the host country, and the industry of human smuggling which includes the presence of smuggling networks of the people (Castles et al., 2012). The roles of the smugglers overlap with the role of the social and family

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networks, as the smugglers are from the same type of family structure (Breines et al., 2015). The smugglers can act as recruiters, hence promoting and paving the way for illegal migration (Bilger et al., 2006). An analysis of human smuggling as a profit-making business shows the interest of smugglers in its expansion. The smugglers play an uncertain role by facilitating illegal migration, and on the other hand, people willing to migrate depend on them as well (Maroufof & Kouki, 2017).

Recent research on illegal migration shows that the choice of destination for illegal migration differs from that of legal migration in some ways (Hagen-Zanker, 2016; Breines, 2015). The factors responsible are the affordability of the migrants (Breines et al., 2015), the easy approach of the smugglers towards the destination (Hagen-Zanker & Mallett, 2016), the information channel through social networks and access to information, the experience of the migration itself, and the migration policies of the destination and host countries (Kuschminder et al., 2015). The people who migrate pay for their migration in different phases or steps and are forced to stay for a longer period than expected in the transit countries before they get a chance or decide to move on to the final destination (Breines et al., 2015). People willing to migrate using unfair means may have increased confidence that they can tolerate hardships better than others. At the same time, some of them have a targeted country to which they want to migrate (Breines et al., 2015). The decision of the migrant changes based upon the harsh weather conditions, route problems, conflicts during migration, and the presence of social networks in the host country. Another category considers the country based on the social and economic profile of the host country and later decides where to move based on the factors discussed above (Cela et al., 2015).

Illegal migrants move to other countries of the world by using various channels and with various complexities. Pakistan is also one of the leading countries in the world where the illegal migrant trend is on the rise. In this scenario, the reasons behind illegal migration are economic and political in nature, and these are known to be the “push factors” behind illegal migration and the expansion of business for migrant smugglers (Barker, 2013). According to the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) and the United Nations Office on Drug and Crime (UNODC), there are around three hundred-thousand to five hundred thousand people move abroad by using illegal means (Koser, 2008; UNODC, 2012). A main proportion of migrants using illegal means belong to central, upper and southern Punjab and some other regions of Pakistan, including Karachi (UNODC, 2012).

In 2023, more than 150 people died due to illegal migration from Libya to Europe in two different incidents. The roots of such migration flow to Greece and Italy are from the upper and South Punjab regions. The use of improper means of migration dominates in the upper region of Punjab due to unawareness of consequences and losses. There are approximately 8 million illegal migrants living in European countries, with a significant proportion of Pakistani migrants. The smugglers in Pakistan, by using the contacts with their counterparts in other parts of the world, transfer people as a business opportunity. This activity is known as a “Business model” for traffickers and smugglers as most of them earn profit by helping people move abroad (Barker, 2013). In this scenario, they advertise their business on various platforms (Koser, 2008), and this practice is commonly used in Gujrat and other surrounding regions (Tahir et al., 2018).

The current study will highlight some of the important factors related to an awareness of migrant smuggling. The research on the level of awareness of the general public about migrant smuggling in Punjab, Pakistan, holds significant importance in relation to the Mediterranean and Italian coast boat disasters. It can help establish the link between awareness and such tragedies, address misconceptions, promote safer migration practices, strengthen law enforcement and border control, and foster international collaboration. By addressing these aspects, the research can contribute to preventing smuggling attempts, protecting vulnerable migrants, and averting future disasters. The main objective of this research is to analyze the socio-economic and demographic determinants of people's awareness of the smuggling of migrants in Punjab, Pakistan.

The current study will highlight some of the important factors related to an awareness of migrant smuggling. The demographic profile of the residents of selected districts of Punjab has been studied with reference to their level of awareness. Other variables, such as the frequency of information attained and the source of information about migrant smuggling in relation to the level of awareness, have also been

studied. In summary, the research on the level of awareness of the general public about migrant smuggling in Punjab, Pakistan, holds significant importance in relation to the Mediterranean and Italy coast boat disasters. The threat to life is there because people are being smuggled using illegal means, and they are also transported through below-the-belt transportation methods. It can help establish the link between awareness and such tragedies, address misconceptions, promote safer migration practices, strengthen law enforcement and border control, and foster international collaboration. By addressing these aspects, the research can contribute to preventing smuggling attempts, protecting vulnerable migrants, and averting future disasters.

1. To analyze the demographic determinants of people's awareness about the smuggling of migrants in Punjab, Pakistan.
2. To analyze social determinants on awareness of people smuggling of migrants in Punjab, Pakistan.

Literature Survey

The information and knowledge of the people about illegal migration is on the higher side. This is because illegal migrants are a threat to them in the form of economic opportunities (Buckler, 2008). There are certain reasons behind the migration of people, which include better employment and economic opportunity, better living standards for the family, and escape from the persecution of any other type of conflict. In order to achieve these objectives, people migrate legally or illegally from one area to another and, in return, pose a threat to the economic opportunities available to the local people. These threats may be in the form of education, income and occupation opportunities (Citrin et al., 1997; Hood III & Morris, 1997; Pantoja, 2006). These variables are a threat to the local people because that low level of education forces them to work in the industrial sector, which in most cases includes construction and manufacturing. This causes problems for the local people with low levels of education. Due to this factor, people from the host country have a fair knowledge of illegal migration (Citrin et al., 1997). Households with higher levels of income and are employed don't have a clear understanding of migrant smuggling. Individuals from these two categories don't take migrant smuggling as a threat (Espenshade & Calhoun, 1994).

The people who migrate illegally become part of the labor force in the area they migrate, resulting in lesser job availability for the local people. This further increases unemployment, low wage structure and hard working conditions (Rita J Simon, 1987). The people who don't have strong social and economic backgrounds are likely to be affected more in this scenario of illegal emigration of people. The reasons behind this are once again the same, which are the low income and skill level of the local people working in the labor market (Abowd & Freeman, 1991; Freeman & Borjas, 1992). On the other hand, higher levels of education, income and white-collar jobs don't have a fair knowledge of the concept of illegal migration (Day, 1990; Associates, 1989b; Associates, 1989a; Day, 1989; Simon, 1987; Moore, 1986; Hoskin, 1983; Starr, 1982). Hence, the level of awareness about migrant smuggling is influenced by the level of education (Moore, 1986).

The Indonesian-based research has elaborated that people's awareness and knowledge of migrant smuggling are related to their social and economic standards. The migration of people on an illegal basis helps improve the standard of living. In addition, there are fifty-six (56) percent of people are not aware of the fact that smuggling of migrants impacts the living standards of the people (IOM, 2010). People's knowledge of migrant smuggling has increased due to awareness campaigns, and people decide to migrate for economic reasons. The major tools used for information transfer are workshops on the smuggling of people and television broadcasting. Comparing it with radio, internet sources, and print media, it has a lesser impact on the knowledge transfer about migrant smuggling (Tjaden et al., 2018).

The importance of awareness campaigns for increasing people's knowledge of migrant smuggling cannot be negated. The focus of such schemes is to target the potential population of society that can be a part of migrant smuggling. The campaign can make use of brochures, books, awareness campaigns, movies etc (Schloenhardt & Philipson, 2013). The distribution of knowledge is spread to various subcontinents, such as Asia, Africa, Europe and America, from where and to where migrate for better opportunities (Nieuwenhuys & Pécoud, 2007; Pécoud, 2010). Other than the awareness campaign, information about human smuggling is available from certain other sources. In this scenario, television is one of the major



sources of information about people smuggling in Malaysia, followed by information sharing from neighbors, peer groups and radio podcasts (IOM, 2010).

The basic motive behind the awareness campaign is to let people know about the complexities related to the phenomenon of migrant smuggling. It also works as a deterrence policy to familiarise people with the hardships related to unlawful migration (Fleay et al., 2016). The deterrence policy is an effective method to reduce crime in society (Stack, 2010). The approach of the people who are willing to migrate may change by letting them know about the hardships, risks, punishment and the cost related to this activity. For instance, some steps have been taken by the Australian government in the form of investing money in raising awareness of migrant smuggling. The amount spent reaches up to 23 million Australian dollars a year (Whyte, 2014b).

The successful illegally migrated people have success stories followed by the improved living standards of the people who migrated to Europe. People share such information on social media in their own social circle and ascertain illegal migration as a game changer in their lives, especially when they return home with an improved economic situation. The migration of people using illegal means from Syria believed and relied on such information rather than knowing about the experience from some official source. Adding to this, the information extracted or shared from social or print media hardly impacts the decision rule of the people to migrate (Dekker et al., 2016). The major reasons behind the decision of poor people to migrate illegally for better economic opportunities are economic and political in nature (Browne, 2015).

The promises made by the smugglers related to sound and smooth migration, job placement and other facilities increase the will of the people to cross the border using illegal means. This is because of a lack of information. There is a need to provide people with the exact situation and information before making up their minds about illegal migration, and it is a good strategy to counter the claims of the smugglers. Potential victims may change their minds if they come to know about the real scenario. On the other side, many are of the view that people who agree to migrate using illegal means know about the hardships of the whole journey and still want to go for it (Alpes & Nyberg Sorensen, 2015; Bemmell, 2015). Many claim that the information they have come across doesn't fit into their situation and ignore it by saying that this cannot happen. Farsight (2016) researched about 199 people migrating from Iran to Australia who were well aware of the situation of the migration process, but they ignored by saying that they could easily settle in Australia and the hardships are only for a shorter period of time.

Allsopp et al. (2021) have researched the cost of policing to prevent migrant smuggling in Italy and Greece. They have found out that the opportunity cost of illegal migration and proper application of the criminal justice system can prevent the movement of people and their level of awareness. Campana and Gelsthorpe (2021) found out that the peer group and the people who have illegally migrated help people learn about the employment made by the smugglers. Spreading information-related strategies, checking information, and developing trust leads to higher migrant smuggling. At the same time, risk awareness turns out to be an important factor in deciding and learning about the procedures of migration (Tjaden & Gninafon, 2022). Snel et al. (2021) explained about the players who provide help to migrate. Social networks, motivation and expectations are the reasons behind the migration process. Through this, people related to those migrating illegally enhance their understanding and knowledge (Fiedler, 2020). The border movement spectacle was released to cater to illegal migration and awareness-raising campaigns. The spectacle publishes information on conveying information to potential migrants, including the opportunities and risk related to illegal migration (Van Dessel, 2021).

There are several studies that explain people's awareness level about migrant smuggling. Factors such as source of information related to awareness of migrant smuggling have been studied by a limited number of researchers (Azage et al., 2014; Shrestha et al., 2015). Meanwhile, the frequency of information about awareness is also not studied in an extensive manner (Bogdan, 2020). The current study focuses on the demographic as well as social and economic determinants related to awareness of migrant smuggling.

Methods and Materials

The current study uses primary data to analyze people's awareness of migrant smuggling in Punjab, Pakistan. The respondents are selected based on the anti-human trafficking and migrant smuggling

regions defined by the Federal Investigation Agency of Pakistan. This research is conducted and based on the largest province of Pakistan in terms of population, where the prevalence of socioeconomic problems is increasing day by day. While collecting the data, the researchers faced hesitation and resistance as the people really didn't want to talk about this issue. There exists a fairly huge number of people who use illegal means to migrate to other countries for better livelihood and earning opportunities.

The survey was conducted in the form of questionnaire-based interviews with the general public in the areas identified by the Federal Investigation Agency as having a higher rate of irregular migration from the five zones identified in the report. The survey was conducted using research teams who were given hands-on training to conduct the interviews with the people. The zones are Lahore, Faisalabad, Multan, Gujranwala and Gujrat.

The data was collected from a total of 660 respondents who were interviewed to fill in a questionnaire. The final form of the data, after cleaning it for errors, contains 67 (sixty-seven) percent male and 33 (thirty-three) percent female respondents. The time frame of the data is from April to July 2022. The questionnaire is developed to contain questions on the demographic, social, and economic levels of awareness about migrant smuggling and measures related to policy decision-making to stop illegal migration. The demographic profile contains questions on living area, gender, age, and city. The social and economic profile contains questions on the level of education, social class, marital status, employment status and income level. People's awareness of migrant smuggling contains questions on frequency, major reasons and sources of information, and reasons for smuggling.

Empirical Model

As the awareness of migrant smuggling is measured on a ranked scale, an ordered logit regression analysis is used to analyze the relationship between the dependent and independent variables. This regression analysis is used when the dependent variables are ordinal in nature (Cameron & Trivedi, 2005).

The model used for this research is as follows, which is further explained in Table 1.

$$AMS^*i = \beta_0 + \beta_1Edu^*i + \beta_2LA^*i + \beta_3.Gen^*i + \beta_4Employ^*i + \beta_5.SC^*i + \beta_6.IF^*i + \beta_7.SOI^*i + \mu_i \dots \dots (1)$$

Variables and Measures

Measures of variables with their scale are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Description of variables used

S#	Variable Name	Scales	Reference	
1.	AMS	Awareness of migrant smuggling	1-5	Gasienica (2020), Farrell (2018), IOM (2010)
2.	Edu	Level of education	1-7	Naik (2014), Rouse et al. (2010)
3.	LA	Area of living	0 or 1	Naik (2014), Bishop et al. (2013)
4.	Gen	Gender	0 or 1	Bishop et al. (2013), Buckler (2008)
5.	Employ	Employment	0 or 1	Mortaza et al. (2012)
6.	SC	Social class	1 to 3	Bogdan (2020)
7.	IF	Source of Information	1 to 5	Shrestha et al. (2015), Azage et al. (2014)
8.	SOI	Frequency of Information	1 to 4	Bogdan (2020)

Awareness of Migrant Smuggling (Dependent Variable)

“Migrant Smuggling is the facilitation, for financial or other material gains, of irregular entry into a country where the migrant is not a national or resident. The criminals behind this highly profitable business seize the opportunity created by the need or desire of people to escape not just poverty and lack of employment opportunities but also natural disaster, conflict or persecution.” (IOM, 2019)

The current research has measured awareness of migrant smuggling by using a fine-point Likert scale by asking people, “How aware are you of Migrant Smuggling.” The responses are recorded on a five-point Likert scale from “not at all aware” to “extremely aware.” A research report in Indonesia (IOM, 2010) has



measured people smuggling by using the question “Are you aware of people smuggling” by taking responses in four categories.

Frequency and source of Information about Migrant Smuggling

In order to elaborate on the level of awareness about migrant smuggling, the study has used the information frequency and source to learn or to be aware of migrant smuggling. The current research uses the information frequency by taking four categories. These categories include “weekly basis,” recorded as “1”, “monthly basis,” recorded as “2”, “bi-annually basis,” recorded as “3”, and “yearly” recorded as “4” following the measure of Bogdan (2020).

Another variable used to measure the level of awareness is the information frequency of coming across news about migrant smuggling. The current study has used the question on information frequency by taking responses in five categories. The responses are recorded as information attained from “Friend/Relative” as “1”, “Radio/Television” as “2”, “social media” as “3”, “Newspaper/Letter” as “4”, and “NGO” as “5”. A report (IOM, 2010) on migration has used “Where did you get information about migrant smuggling” with ten categories to record responses.

Demographic Variables (Control)

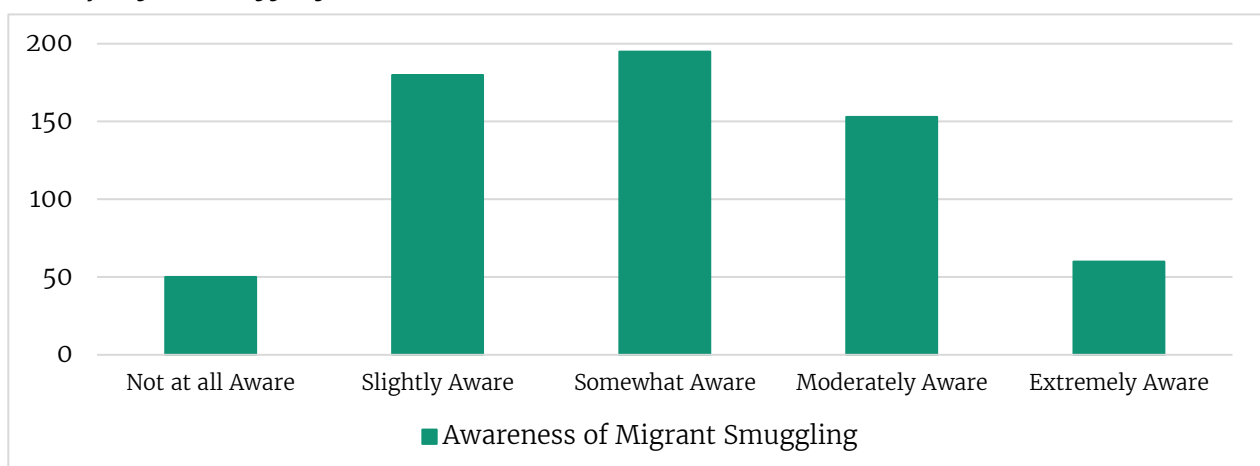
The control (demographic) variables used in the analysis are gender, living area, employment level, and the status of social class. The categories of the gender variable are “female” and “male”. The living area is categorized as “rural” and “urban”. The respondents are also asked about their employment status, whether they are employed or not. The respondents answered “yes” if they were employed and vice versa if not. The social class of the respondents is also added to the analysis, which is a good measure of the social recognition of the respondents. It is measured as “lower class,” “middle class,” and “higher class” categories, which was also used by Bogdan (2020).

Results and Discussion

The descriptive analysis used in the paper is presented in Table 3. The total number of respondents interviewed for the analysis is 660. The male respondents interviewed in the analysis are 69 (sixty-nine), and the females are 31 (thirty-one) percent. Thirty-five percent of the respondents are from rural backgrounds, and the remaining 65 (sixty-five) are from urban areas. The results show that almost thirty-one percent of the respondents are unemployed, and sixty-nine percent of the respondents are employed. The respondents with no formal education are approximately 5 (five) percent, up to a secondary level of education are 18 (eighteen) percent, up to intermediate level of education are 36 (thirty-six) percent, and most of the respondents have up to higher education or above which is 41 (forty-one) percent. A total of 89 (eighty-nine) percent of the respondents come from middle-class families, which is a very high number showing the social status of the people of Punjab, and the remaining 11 (eleven) percent belong to the lower and upper class.

Figure 1

Awareness of migrant smuggling



While trying to know about the information frequency of the news or knowledge about migrant smuggling, 22 (twenty-two), 31 (thirty-one), 20 (twenty), and 27 (twenty-seven) percent of them heard about or came across any information on migrant smuggling on weekly, monthly, bi-annually and yearly basis respectively. The importance-wise ranking of the information sources about migrant smuggling turned out to be social media, friends or relatives, radio or television, newspapers or newsletters, and NGOs. The biggest source of information is social media, where 71 (seventy-one) percent of the respondents have learned about this issue. Last but not least, the level of awareness about migrant smuggling, which has been categorized in a five-point Likert scale, shows that only about 7 (seven) and 13 (thirteen) percent are not at all aware and extremely aware of this phenomenon. The data of the rest of the respondents shows a bell-shaped categorization in which 29 (twenty-nine) are somewhat aware, 27 (twenty-seven) are slightly aware, and 23 (twenty-three) percent are moderately aware (Figure 1). More descriptive analyses are presented in Table 2.

Table 2*Descriptive analysis*

Variables		Frequency	Proportion (%)	
Awareness of Migrant Smuggling	Not at all aware	50	7.6	
	Slightly aware	180	27.3	
	Somewhat aware	194	29.4	
	Moderately aware	152	23.0	
	Extremely aware	84	12.7	
Level of Education (n=660)	No Formal Education	30	4.5	
	Up to Secondary Education	118	17.9	
	Up to Intermediate Education	238	36.1	
	Up to Higher Education and above	274	41.5	
Area of living (n=660)	Rural	231	35.0	
	Urban	429	65.0	
Gender (n=660)	Male	453	68.6	
	Female	207	31.4	
Employment (n=660)	Not Employed	201	30.5	
	Employed	459	69.5	
Social Class Status (n=660)	Low Class	28	4.2	
	Middle Class	587	88.9	
	High Class	45	6.8	
Frequency of information (n=660)	Weekly	149	22.6	
	Monthly	204	30.9	
	Bi-annually	132	20.0	
	Yearly	175	26.5	
Source of Information (n=200)	Friend/Relative	No	370	56.1
		Yes	290	43.9
	Radio/Television	No	454	68.8
		Yes	206	31.2
	Social Media	No	188	28.5
		Yes	472	71.5
	Newspaper/Letter	No	568	86.1
		Yes	92	13.9
	NGO	No	580	87.9
		Yes	80	12.1

Source: Author's Own Calculations

Regression Results

To analyze the relationship between dependent and independent variables, the current study uses ordered logit regression. The ordered logit regression is the best possible technique used for the models having



Likert scale responses of the dependent variable (Cameron and Trivedi, 2005). The impact of social, economic, and demographic variables has been estimated on people's level of awareness about migrant smuggling. The results are presented in Table 3. The respondents who have intermediate and master's education are more aware of migrant smuggling as the level of awareness increases by odds of 2.29 and 3.01 for intermediate and master's level of education, respectively. The level of education shows a significant positive impact on people's awareness of migrant smuggling. People's knowledge about migrant smuggling is enhanced with an enhancement in the level of education (Azage et al., 2014). That means the more the level of education of an individual, the more knowledge that person has on illegal migration. There is a positive significant impact on the level of awareness of the people who live in the urban areas, and the awareness increases by odds of 2.07. Previous studies also show that the knowledge and perception of the people living in the urban areas about migrant smuggling are more than those of the people from the rural areas (Buckler, 2008). The social class of the respondents also has an impact on people's understanding of migrant smuggling. People who belong to the higher social class are more aware of illegal migration by odds of 3.35 than those who belong to the middle or lower class. An improvement in the social structure of the people raises their knowledge and understanding of illegal migration (Buckler, 2008). Lastly, we have not found a significant impact of secondary education, gender, employment status, and respondents from the middle social class on the awareness of migrant smuggling.

The second model used in the analysis is about the information frequency and source, which is regressed over the level of awareness of people about migrant smuggling. An increase in the level of information frequency most probably leads to an increase in people's awareness of migrant smuggling, but the current study has obtained the opposite results. The people who come across information about migrant smuggling on a bi-annual and yearly basis lead to a decline in the awareness level about migrant smuggling. The results of the odd ratios with 0.43 and 0.40 of information on a bi-annual and yearly basis, respectively, explain the above negative significant relationship. Many sources are available from where people come to know about illegal migration. The current study has used five main sources of information. Three out of five show significant results, and the rest of the two show insignificant results. The information gathered or transferred from friends or relatives, social media, and newspapers or letters are among the significant sources of information by odds of 1.85, 1.95 and 1.66, respectively. At the same time, the insignificant ones are the information from radio or television and NGOs.

Table 3

Ordered logit regression model

VARIABLES	(1) Demographic	(2) Social	(3) Awareness
Awareness of Migrant Smuggling	.	.	.
Level of Education			
Secondary Education (8)	1.2625 (0.3352)		1.9530** (0.6126)
Intermediate (12)	2.2977*** (0.5850)		3.2944*** (0.9723)
Up to Master and above	3.0186*** (0.7412)		4.2490*** (1.2140)
Area of living: Urban	2.0757*** (0.3357)		2.0600*** (0.3490)
Gender	0.9327 (0.1490)		0.9962 (0.1689)
Employment	0.8454 (0.1316)		0.8887 (0.1458)
Social Class			
Middle Class	1.0647 (0.3751)		1.0542 (0.4180)
High Class	3.3543*** (1.4330)		3.9623*** (1.8314)

Frequency of Information			
Monthly		0.7829 (0.1735)	0.6775* (0.1535)
Bi-annually		0.4326*** (0.1002)	0.3976*** (0.0925)
Yearly		0.4032*** (0.0966)	0.3693*** (0.0908)
Source of Information			
Friend/Relative		1.8502*** (0.2726)	1.9351*** (0.2839)
Radio/Television		1.0247 (0.1559)	1.1343 (0.1802)
Social Media		1.9555*** (0.3208)	2.0292*** (0.3487)
News Letter/Paper		1.6651** (0.3381)	1.5999** (0.3332)
NGO		1.0392 (0.2690)	1.1924 (0.3067)
Log pseudolikelihood	-939.49433	-934.57696	-898.58832
Observations	660	660	660

Source: Author's Own Calculations

Robust SE in parentheses *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Conclusion

The knowledge and awareness of migrant smuggling are extremely important factors in eliminating the presence of illegal migration from the country. The current study uses ordered logistic regression to analyze the data collected through interview-based questionnaires from 660 individuals in selected cities of Punjab with high rates of illegal migration. The perception and knowledge about the problems prevailing in society are important to tackle and avoid being part of the issues, along with the basic understanding of the social, economic and demographic factors related to the problems of society. Social, economic and demographic factors are key to analyzing the factors responsible for the emergence of different types of crimes in society. The role of government in the awareness of illegal migration cannot be negated and does impact the decision of the people thinking about using illegal means of migration. In today's world of the internet, social media is the highest source of information, followed by friends or relatives and newspapers or newsletters about migrant smuggling. The knowledge and awareness about migrant smuggling increase with an increase in the transfer of knowledge and information using the above-mentioned sources. The present study also aims to analyze the awareness of migrant smuggling by using data from 660 people in the largest province of Pakistan (Punjab).

Results of the study show that education level, living area, status of employment, and the social class to which the respondents belong impact the awareness of migrant smuggling positively. The respondents with up to intermediate, master's, and above levels of education have a clear understanding of the positive impact of the awareness of migrant smuggling. People living in urban areas have higher knowledge of migrant smuggling as compared to those from rural areas. As the socioeconomic class of the respondents improves, the improvement in the understanding of illegal migration also increases. The results also show that social media, which has become an integral part of our lives, is the biggest source of information, along with shared information from friends or relatives.

Another important factor is the awareness campaigns run by the government to increase people's structural knowledge about migrant smuggling issues. The government can make use of media, especially electronic media, to launch information campaigns and rapidly transfer knowledge to the general public. An effective role of civil society can also support people's learning. It could be one of the best solutions if the government adds some topics on migrant smuggling in the curriculum design of the students at various levels. It will not only create awareness of the hardships faced by the people committing such crimes but



will also help the people learn about the grave consequences if they are caught by the border police. The last achievement of the security agencies as a deterrence policy to stop migrant smuggling can be used as a deterrence policy.

Research on such a topic requires a huge number of resources in terms of time and money, which is actually the main reason why researchers might be hesitant to conduct research on it. Research on such a topic can made interesting by adding the real-life stories of the victims of this crime and the change in their knowledge base before and after being part of migrant smuggling. Nonetheless, fellow researchers from the field of economics and other social sciences can expand this research idea to other districts and provinces of Pakistan. A cross-country study with longitudinal analysis could enumerate interesting results. Interesting research can also be conducted on the effectiveness of government measures taken to eliminate migrant smuggling from Pakistan.

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