MS Research Thesis

TRANSITION OF STUDENTS FROM RURAL TO URBAN AREA FOR HIGHER EDUCATION: CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS

Researcher   Supervisor

SYEDA WALEEJA BATOOL   PROF. DR. SAMINA MALIK

2-FOE/MSEDU/S23

DEPARTMENT OF TEACHER EDUCATION

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TRANSITION OF STUDENTS FROM RURAL TO URBAN AREA FOR HIGHER EDUCATION: CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS

Syeda Waleeja Batool

2-FOE/MSEDU/S23

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APPROVAL SHEET

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By

Syeda Waleeja Batool

2-FOE/MSEDU/S23

This thesis has been accepted by the Department of Teacher Education, Faculty of Education, International Islamic University Islamabad in partial fulfillment of the degree of MS Education.

Supervisor: _____
Prof. Dr. Samina Malik
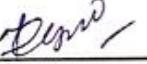
Internal Examiner: _____
Dr. Fouzia Ajmal

External Examiner: _____
Prof. Dr. Muhammad Imran Yousuf

Dated: 23-07-2025
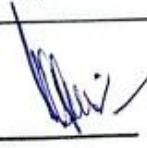
_____
Chairperson
Department of Teacher Education
International Islamic University
Islamabad- Pakistan

_____
Dean
Faculty of Education
International Islamic University
Islamabad- Pakistan

AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

It is hereby declared that author of the study has completed the entire requirement for submitting this research work in partial fulfillment for the degree of MS Education. This thesis is in its present form is the original work of the author except those which are acknowledged in the text. The material included in the thesis has not been submitted wholly or partially for award of any other academic certification than for which it is being presented.

Syeda Waleeja Batool

2-FOE/MSEDU/S23

SUPERVISOR'S CERTIFICATE

The thesis titled ''Transition of Students from Rural to Urban Area for Higher Education:

Challenges and Prospects" submitted by Ms. Syeda Waleeja Batool 2-FOE/MSEDU/S23

is partial fulfillment of MS degree in Education, has been completed under my guidance

and supervision. I satisfied with the quality of student's research work and allow her to

submit this for further process as per IIUI rules and regulations.

Prof. Dr. Samina Malik

Dedication

TO

MY BELOVED PARENTS AND FAMILY

(FOR THEIR UNCONDITIONAL LOVE, SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGMENT THROUGHOUT THIS JOURNEY)

&

MY SUPERVISOR

(FOR GUIDANCE, INSPIRATION AND PATIENCE IN SHAPING THIS WORK)

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Syeda Waleeja Batool

Abstract

The transition from college to university is a change every student has to make in their pursuit of higher education. The transition of these students from secondary to higher education represents a major shift in their academic career. The objectives of the study were to identify the academic progression challenges faced by undergraduate students when transitioning from higher secondary schools in rural areas to universities in urban settings, explore the social integration challenges experienced by undergraduate students when interacting with peers and instructors in an urban setting, investigate the communication challenges experienced by undergraduate students when interacting with peers and faculty members in university settings located in urban areas, explore the coping strategies used by undergraduate students to overcome the academic, social integration and communication challenges, identify the institutional support systems available to reduce the challenges encountered by students in the university. This research utilized a qualitative research design, specifically a phenomenological approach. Population of the study was 220 students who got admission in semester F24 from faculty of education and coming from rural areas. This study employed purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling technique. Data were collected from 15 female BS Students (1st semester) Faculty of Education. Data about the challenges that undergraduate students encounter during the transition process, their coping strategies, and the institutional system were gathered through interviews. Data were analyzed through thematic analysis. The findings of the study reveal that students transitioning from colleges of rural areas to universities in urban settings face challenges when adapting new learning, social and cultural environment. Academically they face difficulty to adjust initially because they are shifting into interactive and independent learning environment in universities in urban settings. To overcome these challenges students adopt various coping strategies such as making groups for the study purpose, seeking support from faculty members and students to improve English language. Family and friends play crucial role to help them to cope up these

challenges while institutional support system were often inaccessible and leaving gaps in meeting students specific needs.

Key words: Academic Progression, Learning environment, Social integration, communication barrier.

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Transition is the process of transferring from one level of education to another. For undergraduate students, moving from secondary to higher education marks a crucial turning. Whereas for the students, moving from a rural to an urban environment is an important turning point, especially when they join university for higher education. Rural students face particular types of challenges when they enroll at universities in urban settings because of their social environment, resources, and background. Three main categories of challenges will be the focus of the study: communication challenges, social integration challenges, and challenges related to academic advancement. In order to meet the challenges of transition, the study intends to investigate their coping strategies and institutional support systems. According to the National Education Association, public rural schools are where students perform the lowest. Sovanak et al. (2015) highlighted challenges such as financial constraints, language barriers, and difficulties in adjusting to an urban lifestyle faced by rural students transitioning to urban universities.

Mbatha and Ntuli (2023) found different challenges faced by rural students as they pursue higher education, concentrating on the University of Zululand (UNIZULU). They draw attention to the challenges rural students have in especially when going to the university. They emphasize that students in rural schools have little exposure to technology because their institutions lack necessary facilities. This make difficult for them to adapt to the technical requirements of universities in urban settings. According to Ratledge (2023), programs like the Montana 10 program are essential for assisting rural students in achieving academic achievement since they face challenges like financial difficulties, and cultural dissatisfaction about higher education.

Ahmed et al. (2021) found that rural students face a range of problems while studying at an urban university. One of the problems they face is social adjustment. They find an entirely different environment when they enter into an urban university. This environment is different than the environment of their rural area in terms of culture, gender interaction, and communication style. The transition from colleges in rural areas to

universities in urban settings exposes students to significant academic challenges. Like rural students reliance on rote memorization whereas universities emphasis on the conceptual understanding. This mismatch creates difficulties for these students in adapting to the university academic culture. The inability to effectively apply study management skills in university environment future aggravate problems. Students coming from rural areas find themselves struggling under increased workload and expectations resulting in stress. (Eusafzai & Suleman, 2024).

These could include academic support services, remedial language classes, and mentorship programs designed specifically for rural student. The difficulties faced by rural students transitioning to urban higher education institutions are explored by Giri and Gupta (2023). These difficulties include lack of funds, poor academic performance, and communication difficulties in other languages`, adjusting to city life, loneliness, and trouble finding friends. When it comes to passing and receiving information during teaching and learning activities, communication is regarded as the peak (Fashiku, 2017).

Rural students may also suffer culture shock when they eventually enroll in university in urban settings. This difficulty is brought on by a number of things, such as moving from a small college to a university with many students. Additionally students coming from rural areas are moving from the environment where they know all fellows to the one where they didn't know anyone. The vastness of the campus may also make rural students feel scared when they arrive at college (Marcus & Krupnick, 2017).

Social integration presents additional challenges since, when adjusting with to universities in urban areas students coming from rural areas encounter cultural differences and feelings of inferiority (Xie, 2015).The social isolation that students coming from rural areas suffer increased by the faculty members when they do unequal treatment with all students which effect their academic achievement and social integration Research also reveals that teachers do discrimination with the students coming from rural areas and there fellows also make them uncomfortable with their behavior. Their unfriendly attitude make the struggle of these students more difficult when integrating socially. They face difficulty when participating in class discussions results of the study indicates that rural students are

less talkative and confident which hinder their capacity to negotiate socially and build lasting relationships with the community. (Chen & Feng, 2019).

High teacher turnover rates and shortages of experienced teachers often making it difficult for rural students to provide individualized learning and mentorship. There may be difference in how students coming from rural areas are prepared and guided for the education in universities. Like they didn't have enough access to technology and resources for standardized tests, and different college admission procedure. Mowreader (2024) highlights that rural students face many challenges like financial challenges, limited college readiness resources and long distance institutions which hinder their academic success.

1.1   Background of the study

The transition of undergraduate students from rural to urban areas for higher education is a complex process during which students face many challenges. This is not only the geographical change but it means making big changes to their social, academic, and cultural lives. More students from rural areas are looking for higher education possibilities in urban areas as urbanization keeps speeding up. Sonyka and Parinha (2015), claimed that even with the establishment of several private and national universities in regional centers, students continue to feel that the quality of education in rural areas is low. Findings of the study revealed that the rural students face a range of problems while studying at university in urban settings. One of the problems they face is social adjustment. They find an entirely different environment when they enter into an urban university. This environment is different than what they have in their own localities in terms of dress and outfit, gender interaction, friends' circle and the communication style (Ahmed et al., 2021).

This shift is not without challenges, rural students face many challenges like social isolation, difficulty in adopting new learning environment and language barriers. These all challenges have effect on general wellbeing, academic achievement and sense of belongingness in the new learning environment. A study shows that students face 46.9% social and communication problems during their shift from rural area to urban area (Özdemir & Tuncay, 2018). They face many other challenges to excel academically in higher education, Schools and universities can make small changes to help these students

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to get out of these challenges. Ahmed et.al (2021) found that rural students face a range of problems while studying at an urban university. One of the problems they face is social adjustment. They find an entirely different environment when they enter into an urban university. They adopt various coping strategies to overcome these challenges. They try to make friends from different cultural backgrounds and discuss their cultural practices with each other in discussions (Masaiti et al., 2020).

A critical challenge highlighted by students coming of rural areas is lack of proficiency in English language which creates hurdles when engaging in academic activities particularly in English Medium Instruction (EMI) settings. This gap leads to stress and poor academic performance, difficulty to do presentations and in participating in class discussions. Due to this gap they lost their confidence which result to create hurdles to excel academically (Eusafzai & Suleman, 2024). Socially and culturally, students gradually adjusted by developing friendships and integrating acceptable cultural practices while maintaining their identity. They try to make friends from different cultural backgrounds and discuss their cultural practices with each other in discussions (Masaiti et al., 2020).

1.2   Problem Statement

The shift from secondary to higher education brings a lot changes and challenges for students. Lack of resources in their hometowns make these challenges more difficult for students coming from rural areas and forcing them to migrate to urban areas to pursue higher education. All students struggle throughout this transition, but because of their disadvantaged background, students from rural areas encounter particular challenges. The problem of research was to what extent undergraduate students face academic, social integration and communication challenges during transition from rural to urban area for higher education. Therefore this study intends to analyze challenges and prospects in the backdrop of transition of students from rural to urban area for higher education.

1.3   Objectives of the Study

Objectives of the study were to:

1. Identify the academic challenges faced by undergraduate students when transitioning from higher secondary schools in rural areas to universities in urban area.
2. Explore the social challenges experienced by undergraduate students when interacting with peers and instructors in an urban area.
3. Investigate the communication challenges experienced by undergraduate students when interacting with peers and faculty members in university settings located in urban areas.
4. Explore the coping strategies used by undergraduate students to overcome the academic, social integration and communication challenges.
5. Identify the institutional support systems available to reduce the challenges encountered by students in the university.

1.4 Research Questions

1. What are the lived experience of undergraduate students regarding academic challenges while changing their learning environment from rural higher secondary schools to universities in urban area?
2. How do undergraduate students experience and navigate social challenges when interacting with peers and instructors in an urban area?
3. What communication challenges experienced by undergraduate students when interacting with peers and faculty members in university settings located in urban areas?
4. How do undergraduate students of rural areas cope with the challenges they encounter during the transition to university in urban area?
5. What are the experiences of undergraduate students from rural areas regarding institutional support systems designed to help them to reduce the challenges they encounter in the university?

1.5 Significance of the Study

Findings of the study will help build targeted strategies and assistance plans that will help rural students transition to urban higher education environments more easily, provide rural students with knowledge about educational challenges and help them make informed decisions. Universities especially foster an inclusive learning environment by

addressing to the particular needs of rural students. Most importantly, by providing rural students with the knowledge and resources they require to make better academic decisions, the study's conclusions can empower them. By identifying potential communication challenges, social challenges, and adjustment issues, students can more effectively prepare for and become ready for an academic accomplishment.

1.6 Delimitation of the Study

The study was delimited to female students enrolled in the 1st semester of the BS program (F24) Faculty of Education. International Islamic university Islamabad. Students who are from rural areas and transitioning into higher education for undergraduate studies in urban area.

1.7 Operational Definitions

1.7.1 Transition

Transition in this study refers to the phenomenon of undergraduates moving from rural to urban areas for higher education. This shift includes various aspects such as adaptation of new learning environments, social integration etc.

1.7.2 Learning Environment

The physical and social setting in which learning occurs is referred as the learning environment. Together with the materials, tools, and teaching strategies used in these settings, this also includes lecture halls, classrooms, libraries, labs, and other educational facilities.

1.7.3 Social Integration

The term "social integration" in this study refers to the unique challenges that students from rural backgrounds have while trying to make connections with fellows for academic purpose, build relationships, and participate in the social life of university in urban settings.

1.7.4 Rural Students

Rural students, for the purpose of this study, are defined as students who reside in areas characterized by low population density, limited access to urban facilities and

services. These students may attend rural schools, which may offer less opportunity and resources for education than schools in urban settings.

1.7.5   Rural Area

''Rural area'' in context of this study is characterized as the far-flung areas with limited infrastructure and lacking advanced technologies and courses in educational institutions. Access to other services and healthcare is also limited.

1.8   Conceptual Framework

Fig 1.8.1

Conceptual Framework
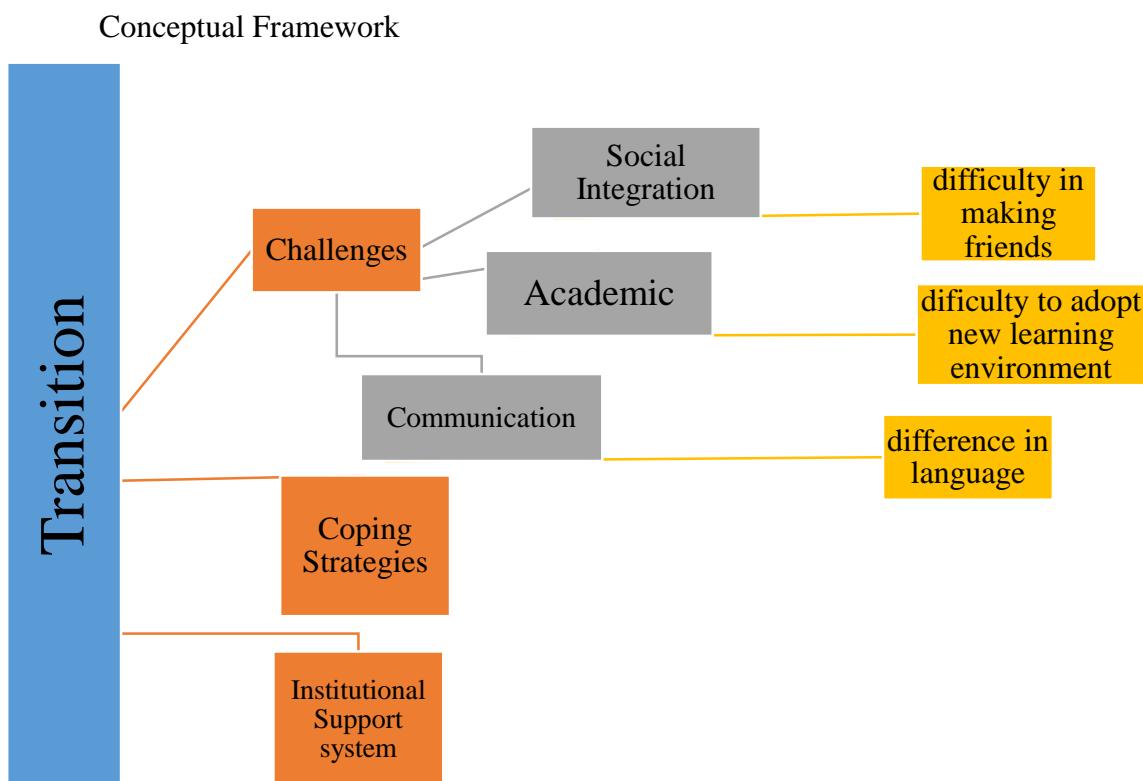
The conceptual framework demonstrates that when students move from rural to urban area a number of factors interact to affect students. Key elements of this process are academic challenges, Social integration challenges and communication challenges. Students use coping strategies to overcome these challenges and institutional support networks must put into place effectively to handle these difficulties. The challenges faced by rural students when moving to urban area for higher education are explored by Giri and

Gupta (2023). These difficulties include lack of funds, poor academic performance, language barriers, loneliness, communication challenges and difficulty in finding friends. When it comes to passing and receiving information during teaching and learning communication is very important (Fashiku, 2017). According to Sovanak et.al (2015) it's critical to offer support services to help students in urban universities with their linguistics and academic difficulties. These could include mentorship programs, academic support services and language classes designed specifically for students coming from rural areas.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter covers the existing body of research related to the transition of students from rural to urban areas for higher education. It explores various challenges faced by these students, including academic progression, social integration, and communication barriers.

2.1   Academic Challenges

Mbatha and Ntuli (2023) found different challenges faced by rural students as they pursue higher education, concentrating on the University of Zululand (UNIZULU). They draw attention to the challenges rural students have in especially when going to the university. They emphasize that students in rural schools have little exposure to technology because their institutions lack necessary facilities. This make difficult for them to adapt to the technical requirements of universities in urban settings. According to Ratledge (2023), programs like the Montana 10 program are essential for assisting rural students in achieving academic achievement since they face challenges like financial difficulties, and cultural dissatisfaction about higher education.

Some educational researches examined several barriers rural students face when moving to urban areas for higher education. Many students coming from rural areas are not prepared academically, socially, or culturally to start in urban universities. Rural students frequently experience resource limitations, such as poverty and financial hardships, which make it difficult for them to pursue higher education. Ali, Sarker, Islam, and their colleagues (2021) conducted a mixed-method study involving a survey of 400 students and 10 in-depth interviews to explore adaptation challenges faced by rural students at urban universities in Bangladesh. The study revealed issues like food quality, unhealthy accommodation and problems like depression and anxiety. These findings emphasize the difficulties that students encounter during transition from rural to urban environment.

Various challenges prevent rural students from succeeding in higher education. These children come from underfunded schools that lack resources like Advanced Placement classes, extracurricular activities, and proper counseling. They face difficulties in adjusting in urban areas in every aspect like hostel, food, culture, academic style,

classroom size etc. They represent a varied demography that includes Black, Latino/a, Indigenous, and white people (Vyse, 2023).

Among the many difficulties these students encounter is poor academic performance, which is impacted by insufficiencies in cultural capital and family finances (Xie, 2015). According to Ashley Mowreader's (2024), rural students have major obstacles when trying to enroll in and finish their higher education. These include problems with affordability brought on by greater rates of poverty, a lack of resources for college readiness brought on by staff shortages in rural high schools, and difficulties recruiting students to colleges because of institutions' disregard for rural populations. Further, rural students may not have dependable internet access for online courses and frequently reside in "postsecondary deserts," which are remote areas from colleges. Students' efforts to attend college are made harder by unfavorable opinions regarding the worth of higher education in rural areas. The study outlines actions that educational institutions can take to tackle these issues and assist students in rural areas (Mowreader, 2024).

Ahmed et.al (2021) found that rural students face a range of problems while studying at an urban university. One of the problems they face is social adjustment. They find an entirely different environment when they enter into an urban university. This environment is different than the environment of their rural area in terms of culture, gender interaction, and communication style. They feel awkward when interacting opposite gender in urban areas. They have different communication style as compared to their other fellows due to which they feel reluctant to communicate with their fellows. It creates hurdles or them even to move academically.

The transition from colleges in rural areas to universities in urban settings exposes students to significant academic challenges. Like rural students reliance on rote memorization whereas universities emphasis on the conceptual understanding. This mismatch creates difficulties for these students in adapting to the university academic culture. Students from remote areas must also get used to their new instructors when they start college. Due to their inability to keep up with the professors' rapid-fire style of instruction, rural pupils expressed that they were unable to adapt to the teachers. Rural students primarily have this difficulty when they initially enroll in college, but they

eventually adapt to the instructors. The change from their upper secondary school timetable to the opposing semester system in college may have been the cause of their incapacity to adapt to the speed at which their lecturers taught. Under the semester system of education, classes last only a few weeks, and professors have little time to finish the syllabus. The inability to effectively apply study management skills in university environment future aggravate problems. Students coming from rural areas find themselves struggling under increased workload and expectations resulting in stress (Eusafzai & Suleman, 2024).

The challenges faced by rural students when entering to institutions in urban settings have been a subject of numerous researches worldwide (Fleming & Grace, 2017; Pheko et al., 2014; Va & Seyhak, 2015; Xiulan, 2015). According to review of literature many students coming from rural areas lack the academic and social skills necessary to succeed in college at institutions in urban settings. They face totally new environment and unluckily their urban fellows are not much cooperative if they would cooperate with them they can overcome challenges more effectively. It has been discovered that urban institutions and cultural practices differ greatly from those in rural places (Xiulan, 2015).

The majority of students in Botswana migrated from rural areas experience cultural shocks and other physical and environmental stress during their first two years of university according to the study of experiences (Pheko et al., 2014). Some of the challenges faced by students coming from rural areas in Republic of South Africa were discovered via a case study of Unisa students experience there. One of the biggest obstacles to rural families' support of higher education is financial hardship. Rural students frequently lack access to financial assistance programs due to a lack of knowledge about scholarships and poorer academic performance (Herskovic & Silva, 2024).

Compared to higher secondary school, rural students said they had to put in more effort, take ownership of their education, develop better study habits, and take their studies more seriously in college. Participants emphasized that they had to study harder at college since the academic demands were higher and more demanding than those in upper secondary school. They stated that they had been spoon-fed by their teachers in school, and that most of them just began taking notes instead of relying on them when they were in

college, which was a difficult habit for them all. Many rural students struggle to understand lectures, interact with course materials, and communicate with peers and faculty members because they don't speak the language of instruction well. Poor academic performance among students in rural areas is a result of a lack of resources and educational opportunities. Their readiness for higher education at urban colleges is hindered by their inability to acquire high-quality education in rural areas. According to (Sovanak et al., 2015) it's critical to offer treatments and supportive tools to help rural students in urban colleges with their academic and linguistic difficulties.

These could include academic support services, remedial language classes, and mentorship programs designed specifically for rural student. The difficulties faced by rural students transitioning to urban higher education institutions are explored by Giri and Gupta (2023). These difficulties include lack of funds, poor academic performance, and communication difficulties in other languages`, adjusting to city life, loneliness, and trouble finding friends. When it comes to passing and receiving information during teaching and learning activities, communication is regarded as the peak (Fashiku, 2017).

A critical challenge highlighted by students coming of rural areas is lack of proficiency in English language which creates hurdles when engaging in academic activities particularly in English Medium Instruction (EMI) settings. This gap leads to stress and poor academic performance, difficulty to do presentations and in participating in class discussions. Due to this gap they lost their confidence which result to create hurdles to excel academically (Eusafzai & Suleman, 2024).

First-year rural students' experiences are significantly influenced by the language of teaching that has been chosen, particularly when a foreign language is being used (Sawir, 2005; Uleanya & Gamede, 2017; Li & Carroll, 2017) For example, Uleanya and Gamede (2017) state that students whose first language is not English may face various challenges when learning in new language. Rural students find it challenging to adjust when they discover instructional technology at UNIZULU because the majority of rural schools lack it. According to the findings, first-year students at UNIZULU experienced utilizing computers and touching mice for the first time. According to the participants, they were not taught computer skills in the rural schools they attended. A sizable percentage of

participants did not have access to scientific labs or computers. The challenges faced by students coming from rural areas is stemmed from their limited knowledge of technology (ICT) and poor English language skills. Because of their poor English language skills they face difficulty in understanding English language courses, and due to lack of technological skills they face difficulty in making presentations and making statistical software (Ahmed et al., 2021).

According to Masaiti et al. (2020), variations in classroom dynamics and instructional strategies caused rural University of Zambia students to find it difficult to adjust to higher education. According to their study, students had difficulty in adjusting to new educational process including taking notes and understanding unfamiliar terminologies by faculty members. These challenges highlighted the need for special assistance to help rural students who migrated from rural areas to urban areas for higher education. Nearly every participant in the survey said that they had finished their upper secondary education at a school with small class sizes. Because of the tiny class sizes, the teachers were able to know each student by name and provide them with individualized attention. Their teachers, however, are unable to provide students with individualized attention and get to know them personally due to the size of college classrooms. Due to these changes, rural students feel excluded by their teachers and as though they can't adapt to the large classroom setting.

Transitioning from college to university rural students face difficulties to adjust to a new learning environment. Most of the students find fast paced learning environment stressful and most of the students find it difficult in managing their time and understanding lectures. These difficulties are worse when foreign faculty members use totally different accent which is unfamiliar for students. This suggests that some students coming from rural areas are not equipped to meet the expectations of the teachers and university (Lefoka & Tlali, 2021).

Students coming from rural areas expressed that it was very difficult for them to adapt the lecture method (Myrthong & Nonglait, 2021). With comparison to their peers from the urban area in university students coming from rural areas find it more difficult to compete with them, according to research by Maxwell and Mudhovozi (2014), which was

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done using a qualitative research methodology. According to them, there are a number of reasons why many high college students belonging from rural areas find it difficult to get into universities. These include the seats in the universities, low scores in admission tests which results in failing requirement for admission and off course economic difficulties are there.

Various studies have repeatedly demonstrated that because of inequalities in educational institutions students from rural areas find difficulty when transferring to university. Rural National University of Lesotho students found it difficult to adapt to the fast-paced, autonomous learning environment of the university, according to Lefoka and Tlali (2021). These students frequently attend schools where their teachers thought the curriculum very slowly, focus on memorization and teachers focus on writing notes on the board. Teachers at their areas are not much educated and they didn't focus to clear the concept of students. It also creates hurdles for them when entering to the new environment.

Nearly every participant in the survey said that they had finished their upper secondary education at a school with small class sizes. Because of the tiny class sizes, the teachers were able to know each student by name and provide them with individualized attention. Their teachers, however, are unable to provide students with individualized attention and get to know them personally due to the size of college classrooms. Due to these changes, rural students feel excluded by their teachers and as though they can't adapt to the large classroom setting. When coming from this type of environment it is harder for many students adjust to the lecture based instruction and the expectations of university (Lefoka & Tlali, 2021).

Masaiti et.al (2020) observed that rural students transitioning to urban universities like the University of Zambia mostly struggle to adapt to academic environment which is different from those in their secondary schools. They face difficulty in understanding lectures such as note dictation and they face difficulty in understanding difficult words used by teachers during lectures because their previous teachers use simple words and medium of instruction at their area is in their local language. Congested classrooms further make challenging for these students to grasp concepts effectively. They feel ignored in

front of their urban fellows. Students from urban areas are much confident and they participate effectively in the class as compare to their rural fellows.

2.2   Social Integration Challenges

Language proficiency challenges are a common barrier for students transitioning from rural to urban area for higher education. Pheko et al. (2014) found that university students in Botswana who are originally from rural areas found difficulties in understanding English language. Rural students are very shy because they feel that their urban fellows have good English language skills which result in silence from students coming from rural areas in class discussions. One participant expressed her discomfort, noting, "There are many students who speak nice English; so the thought of opening my mouth with my broken English terrifies me...I know my participation grade will suffer". This reaction highlights how language barriers can significantly hinder academic engagement and confidence.

Social integration presents additional challenges since, when adjusting with to universities in urban areas students coming from rural areas encounter cultural differences and feelings of inferiority (Xie, 2015).The social isolation that students coming from rural areas suffer increased by the faculty members when they do unequal treatment with all students which effect their academic achievement and social integration Research also reveals that teachers do discrimination with the students coming from rural areas and there fellows also make them uncomfortable with their behavior. Their unfriendly attitudes make the struggle of these students more difficult when integrating socially. They face difficulty when participating in class discussions results of the study indicates that rural students are less talkative and confident which hinder their capacity to negotiate socially and build lasting relationships with the community (Chen & Feng, 2019).

Rural students may also suffer culture shock when they eventually enroll in university in urban settings. This difficulty is brought on by a number of things, such as moving from a small college to a university with many students. Additionally students coming from rural areas are moving from the environment where they know all fellows to the one where they didn't know anyone. The vastness of the campus may also make rural

students feel scared when they arrive at college (Marcus & Krupnick, 2017). Masaiti et.al (2020) observed that rural students transitioning to urban universities like the University of Zambia (UNZA) often struggle to adapt to academic practices significantly different from those in their secondary schools. Students reported difficulty with lecture styles, such as note dictation, and faced challenges understanding the technical language used by lecturers. Congested lecture halls further compounded these challenges, making it difficult for students to grasp concepts effectively.

For everyone, moving into college can be both an exciting and scary moment. Students experience mixed emotions when they enter new and unfamiliar environments, (Chambliss & Takacs, 2014). While they are enthusiastic to explore a world full of fascinating options, they are also nervous about establishing new connections. When rural students get on campus, they have the same difficulties as other college students: establishing new friendships. Compared to their urban counterparts, rural students receive less praise from professors and fewer questions in class. The majority of interviewees stated that they had previously attended a small school where all of the students knew one another. Nevertheless, these students had to leave their group of long-time friends behind when they started college and had to find new ones, which was a challenging task. When they initially started college, rural students said they felt lonely because they missed their school friends.

Due to a lack of educational possibilities in their high schools, many rural students report feeling intellectually underprepared, which makes it difficult for them to adapt to coursework at the collegiate level (Ganss, 2016). Additionally, because of their limited prior experiences, students frequently struggle to navigate institutional procedures and form new social bonds. Due to a lack of educational possibilities in their high schools, many rural students report feeling intellectually underprepared, which makes it difficult for them to adapt to coursework at the collegiate level. Due of their limited prior experiences, students frequently struggle to navigate institutional procedures and form new social bonds.

Rural students frequently believe that, as in high school, they would be able to get to know everyone on campus when they first come. Having the belief that they needed to

be friends with everyone could hinder their ability to make friends at college because it is hard to be friends with everyone at a major university. If they are unable to establish deep connections with everyone they meet, they may also feel even more alone and like they have failed. Sometimes, urban students assume that everyone from rural areas is narrow-minded. Due to these beliefs, students from non-rural areas tend to approach their rural counterparts differently, which makes rural students feel uncomfortable in their new surroundings. Another layer of complication is introduced by economic demands, such as the requirement to support family members during financial crises or contribute to their income (Vyse, 2023).

Rural students may also suffer from culture shock when they eventually enroll in college. This sensation is brought on by a number of things, such as moving from a small school to a university with a big student body. Additionally, rural students are moving from a setting where they have known all of their neighbors for a long time to one where they might not know anyone. The vastness of the campus may also make rural students feel scared when they arrive at college (Marcus & Krupnick, 2017).

Students from rural places may feel isolated if they don't dress like the others in their new setting. Their fellows from urban settings stare at them and make them feel uncomfortable. When rural students don't wear name-brand cloths and work attire that are more commonly seen in urban settings, people in urban areas may stare at them for things that were normal and acceptable in their hometowns, such as wearing boots and becoming covered in barn mud. Many rural students would not have their lifelong peer group when they initially enroll in college (Webb, 2019). Rural students typically experienced loneliness and a lack of social connections as a result of this. Some of the students them try to copy the culture of the urban areas which also make them low confident because they are not comfortable with their dressing style. While some rural students may be self-conscious about their appearance, others may proudly wear their cowboy boots and enjoy their rural attire, even in their new urban setting (Heinisch, 2018).

Transitioning to higher education can provide significant social and cultural barriers for students from rural areas. While the majority of study participants transitioned well socially, Masaiti et al. (2020) observed that significant numbers of them found it

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difficult to establish new contacts. Some students, for example, took their time forming relationships with others, initially choosing to stick with friends from their secondary school. The interaction between students and lecturers plays a significant role in students' academic experiences, especially for those adjusting to new educational environments. Pheko et al. (2014) noted that many students feel hesitant to engage actively in class discussions or to question lecturers, which can be attributed to the intimidating classroom environment. Some students try to spend their time in the hostel of mostly in the library because they face difficulty in making friends because of difference in backgrounds. They have to struggle a lot both to move academically and socially.

Upon enrolling in college, rural students were surrounded by unfamiliar faces and had very few classmates they knew. Because they have not gone outside of their buddy group to try making new friends in a new setting, this situation makes it harder for them to create new friendships in college (Nonglait & Myrthong, 2021). But rural college students also have to learn how to make friends with people from different backgrounds (Webb, 2019) in addition to learning how to make new friends. According to Herskovic and Silva (2024), social issues and worse academic preparation sometimes cause rural students in Chile to be at a significant disadvantage when it comes to taking university entrance examinations. In order to deal with their difficulties, survey participants said they used to talk about them with their parents, siblings, and friends. Students in rural areas believe that discussing their circumstances with loved ones is really beneficial. According to rural students, speaking with a loved one actually offers them the power and determination they need to overcome any obstacles in their lives. Students frequently have to make cultural and social adjustments when moving from rural to urban environment which cause them to feel alone in their new surroundings.

Masaiti et al. (2020) highlighted the difficulties rural students face in adjusting to the social norms in urban settings. Some students reported that they feel hesitant when engaging socially especially with peers and with the opposite sex fellows due to cultural restrictions. Some students struggles with dress code. They find urban lifestyle inappropriate for them. Karpukhno (2024) emphasizes how crucial it is to help rural students feel like they belong in order to guarantee their academic and social success in

postsecondary education. Students from rural areas frequently struggle with social adjustment, which might make it more difficult for them to integrate into the college environment. Additionally, rural students' chances of becoming student leaders or achieving social success are diminished by a lack of family capital, which includes lower parental income and education. Universities are encouraged to create a more welcoming campus culture that honors rural customs while promoting adjustment to urban standards. They should also put in place focused support mechanisms to close social and intellectual divides (Xie, 2015). Pheko et al. (2014) found that young people who had not previously lived apart from their families often struggle with the absence of daily family support in areas like financial management, academic monitoring, and time management.

Yan and Wu (2020) claim that because rural students thought urban students held themselves to a higher standard, urban students felt disconnected from them. They would therefore avoid engaging urban students. The urban university setting presented challenges for rural students to adapt to, such as clothing code, communication style, student openness, peer and teacher interactions, and anxiety. While most students were able to adjust with time, the first few months were difficult (Ahmed et al., 2021).

2.3 Economic Challenges

Financial limitations, however, continue to be one of the most prevalent obstacles. Rural households, whose main source of income frequently depends on precarious agricultural labor, are disproportionately impacted by high tuition expenses combined with the high cost of living in urban areas. To pay for tuition, rent, and study materials, parents in these situations usually have to borrow money, sell possessions, or endure hardship in order to support their children's education. However, these problems are made worse by institutional difficulties, as colleges frequently do not offer sufficient support networks for rural students moving to cities, leaving them to deal with social, academic, and financial difficulties mostly alone (Chea, 2015). Despite these challenges, many women persevere because of their innate desire to end poverty cycles and attain social mobility. To make up for structural shortcomings, their coping mechanisms include joining study groups, working part-time, and enlisting the help of peers and family.

Ahmed et al. (2021) point out a number of difficulties that rural students encounter when attending metropolitan colleges. Due to the disparities in dress conventions, gender roles, and communication patterns between their rural and urban upbringings, some students find it difficult to adjust socially. Issues with lodging and transport make their experience much more difficult because many students feel physical exhaustion and lengthy travel periods, which impair their capacity to handle their academic obligations.

Ali et.al (2021) conducted a mixed-method study involving a survey of 400 students and 10 in-depth interviews to explore adaptation challenges faced by rural students at urban universities in Bangladesh. The study revealed issues such as substandard food quality, unhealthy accommodation, and mental health problems like depression and anxiety. These findings emphasize the multidimensional difficulties that students encounter during their transition to urban higher education settings. Numerous challenges prevent rural students from succeeding in higher education and from gaining access to it. These children come from underfunded schools that lack resources like Advanced Placement classes, extracurricular activities, and proper counseling. They represent a varied demography that includes Black, Latino/a, Indigenous, and white people (Vyse, 2023).

2.4 Psychological and Emotional Challenges

Students who attend rural high schools are more likely than those who attend urban high schools to face psychological and physical stress (Banerjee, 2016). As a result, this may have an impact on their academic performance and make it more difficult for them to enroll in the programs they want to pursue. Many rural students feel overwhelmed by the variety of academic, social, and extracurricular possibilities because they lack a "roadmap" to traverse complicated institutional systems (Karpukhno, 2024). Due to their special bond with their hometown and community, rural students are more likely to form enduring bonds that serve as crucial support networks. Therefore, it may be advantageous for rural students to locate groups on campus that may offer extra support comparable to what they have received from their close-knit hometowns. This could ultimately boost their sense of belonging and help in persistence.

According to Lefoka and Tlali (2021), rural students in higher education face number of difficulties like making decisions on their own, isolation and social adjustment

challenges. For example they find it awkward to interact socially with the friends coming from other backgrounds because of different language accents. These problems underline the need of support services to assist students coming from rural areas to make a smooth transition of university life, leaving their family presents a significant challenge. They miss their family and it creates difficulty for them to adjust in urban areas. They have to do their laundry, room cleaning by themselves due to which they face difficulty in managing time which make it difficult for them to manage hostel life with studies. Students coming from rural areas suffer social isolation, which make it difficult for them to adjust to the social and urban areas. According to studies, feeling of loneliness made worse for students because of their unfamiliarity with urban culture (Nyatuka, 2019).

The academic and social challenges faced by students coming from rural areas lead to a psychological. A key factor that helps these students cope is a sense of achievement upon admission to the university. This positive psychological experience gives students the resilience to face the difficulties they encounter. The support from their friends to adjust in universities in urban settings can help them to excel academically. Several students expressed concern and uncertainty about their capacity to thrive in college due to their inexperience with demanding courses. Students may find it difficult to believe in their own capacity to succeed in the classroom if they believe that past circumstances beyond their control have left them unprepared for college coursework. Additionally, the support of faculty members plays a significant role in helping these students overcome academic ggstruggles (Eusafzai & Suleman, 2024).

First-generation students typically go alone to and through college; their families just do not know how to support them, in contrast to students whose families have attended college and can offer them some degree of support. Their capacity to effectively use higher education as a vehicle for mobility is hampered by social and cultural hurdles, since they find it difficult to adjust to a new social structure and to be away from their families and communities. Everything in the urban settings is new for them, they miss their family and friends in every step. They need additional support from people to adjust in urban areas. These structural barriers compound the difficulties these students encounter by interacting with race and class-based disparities (Parsons, 2022).

2.5   Coping Strategies Adopted by Rural Students

Rural students adopted several coping strategies to address their challenges. Academically, they formed study groups and sought guidance from approachable lecturers. They try to read lecture material before class to understand thing during lecture effectively. They discuss difficult concepts with their friends in study groups with the ideas of others they get the difficult points. Economically, they engaged in entrepreneurial activities and relied on peer support during financial hardships. They try to do paid internships and some of the students try to do online jobs to support themselves financially because of high fee expenses. Technologically, they learned to use digital tools with the help of peers. Some students didn't have laptops so they take laptop from their fellows and also try to understand about the use of technology to make their assignments and presentations. Socially and culturally, students gradually adjusted by developing friendships and integrating acceptable cultural practices while maintaining their identity. They try to make friends from different cultural backgrounds and discuss their cultural practices with each other in discussions (Masaiti et al., 2020).

According to Parsons (2022), many rural students must permanently move from rural area to urban area to pursue higher education. In order to overcome the academic challenges scholarship and rural outreach programs are the two examples of initiatives that have shown success in raising the number of rural students. Rural students get benefits from these initiative and overcome challenges. They need better mentorship programs to overcome the challenges. To cope with the academic and social challenges they use various coping strategies to overcome these challenges such as peer support, instructors support, and use various coping mechanisms. Incentives and regulations that support rural students admission to colleges, especially in STEM subjects, would ultimately benefit the students and perhaps the communities in which they live. Additionally, it would lessen disparities in a centralized admissions system that ignores the many opportunity costs and challenges that students from rural and urban locations encounter (Nyatuka, 2019).

To increase the enrollment and completion rates of rural students in higher education, institutions might implement a number of measures. Stronger pipelines for rural students can be established by investing in rural recruitment through expanded counseling

services and application assistance, such those offered by the Small Town and Rural Students College Network. Institutions have responded to these challenges by putting in place campus support programs like the University of Georgia's program, which offers academic coaching and scholarships, as well as focused recruitment strategies like the STARS College Network. In order to help remote students' educational journeys, infrastructure solutions have also been created, such as more inexpensive broadband connections and better transportation (Vyse, 2023).

Additionally, prospective students can get a taste of college life early by establishing summer programs and collaborating with remote high schools to offer campus visits. All parties involved must respect rural students and the social advantages of an active, knowledgeable, and inclusive society. Adopting messaging that raises awareness and decreases cognitive dissonance regarding the detrimental effects of students leaving for college is also crucial. Research on rural students must also be disseminated to all relevant parties, such as community members, parents, instructors, and college and university admissions personnel. Many institutions must rely on charity to increase support for rural students, including recruitment, because of the lack of government financing. Since rural students frequently lack institutional information on accessing higher education, closing knowledge gaps is particularly crucial. Programs such as dual enrollment classes, consulting, and mentorship can offer vital assistance. Last but not least, rural students can overcome financial obstacles to their academic performance by receiving support and customized financial aid programs (Mowreader, 2024).

Given their particular challenges and motives, rural students should receive extra help from urban universities (Ahmed et al., 2021). To address challenges, Ali et al. (2021) identified coping strategies adopted by rural students such as fostering a positive attitude, joining social associations, and seeking emotional support by talking to friends and family members. Each student adapts differently based on their particular circumstances, social support, copying resources, maturity, and temperament. Young people's ability to adapt is influenced by both severe life circumstances and their level of control over the circumstance. First-year students can benefit from the useful advice. Parents should be made aware of the facts that a college-educated individual may be able to live in their

hometown while working remotely or commuting, as part of a concerted effort to educate them about preparing their children for college and university. Parents should be consciously educated on how to get their kids ready for college and university, including teaching them that a college graduate may be able to live in their hometown but work somewhere else, such as working remotely or commuting. Such strategies were instrumental in helping students manage the stress associated with the adaptation process. Students try to take help from their fellows who are cooperative to excel academically they also try to participate in social activities to boost their confidence.

Educators, scholars, policymakers, and the general public all agree that students in rural schools often receive less of a quality education than those in urban schools. Students' backgrounds also have an impact on their performance, and it is clear that many students in rural areas do worse academically than those in urban ones. This performance difference between students in rural and urban settings is caused by a variety of reasons. When compared to students in rural schools, students attending urban schools enjoy numerous advantages. According to the National Education Association, public rural schools are where students perform the lowest. (Sovanak et al., 2015) highlighted challenges such as financial constraints, language barriers, and difficulties in adjusting to an urban lifestyle faced by rural students transitioning to urban universities.

2.6   Advantages and Disadvantages of Urban vs. Rural Education

Ganss (2016) investigated how rural Oregon students transitioned throughout their first year. They employed narrative inquiry in her study to discover the common experiences and enrollment challenges experienced by rural students. The researcher discovered four main themes from the student narratives she gathered: motivations for attending college; lack of social and extracurricular activity; unexpected emotional and social transition into college; new exposure to diversity and awareness of a rural identity.

According to Ganss (2016), rural students feel unprepared for college, particularly in terms of making friends. Additionally, they believe that professionals in higher education are not doing enough to support them when they transition and start to doubt their rural identity and values for the first time. The researcher pointed out that although

there isn't much research on rural identity at the moment, there ought to be as it has a significant impact on how rural students perceive college.

Morton et.al (2018) looked at the fears, worries, and perceived obstacles of aspiring rural college students. He conducted a study in which they interviewed ten high-achieving rural high school students to have a better understanding of their experiences as they start to get ready for college the rural students who participated in the survey described their villages as being close-knit and lacking in possibilities for jobs, shopping, and teen activities.

Participants in Morton et al.'s (2018) study revealed that smaller class size and individualized support as one benefit. Many participants were concerned that they were not ready to go to college they were not able to enroll in the college and they think that they would either fail or get out of college. Additionally they were concerned about social group that how will they find friends in the college. Last but not least, a large number of participants in survey expressed that they are concerned with about academic preparation. According to them they feel less prepared them the fellows from urban areas may result in social isolation. In order to make students feel comfortable and confidence the researcher mentioned that it is critical for the educational institutions in rural settings to start empowering student's early.

The demands of a higher education is difficult for the students coming from rural areas to adjust to, when they were not exposed to technology in their previous learning. Lefoka and Tlali (2021) investigated the National University of Lesotho (NUL) experiences of students coming from rural origins adjusting to the university life in urban origins. To better prepare potential students for higher education, high schools need to have counselors or career guidance officers to share information and support to students as well as make connections with the parents as well as community. This will help them know about campus life, including the attitudes and behaviors to expect. On their part, universities need to make strong connections with rural communities to reduce any dissonance regarding potential attendance of rural students. This could be achieved through engagement in promotional messaging like offering scholarships and bursaries as well as making it easy to apply and attend campus. They conclude that students coming from rural areas are with the lack of technological skills. Most of these students find it difficult to

finish assignments which are computer based. This compelled them to ask for the assistance. Their dependence on outside help made it more difficult for them to learn on their own, which further complicated their academic path (Lefoka & Tlali, 2021).

2.7 Other Challenges

The difficulties that rural students have when moving to urban areas for higher education to universities in urban areas including problems with social integration, cultural differences and academic readiness. Rural students may face challenges which hindered their academic success. They need specialized programs and extracurricular activities. Travelling and accommodation complicated their experience. Many students face transportation issues and physical fatigue. Which affect them to succeed academically (Ahmed et al., 2021).

This transition is difficult for the students especially for the students of color, it involves navigating different social and economic and cultural contexts they are less familiar as compared to their urban class fellow (Parsons, 2022). In addition to researching some of the elements that affected first-year rural university student experiences, Uleanya and Uleanya (2017) also looked at how students transitioned from urban to rural high schools to rural colleges. The study's findings indicate that a variety of factors, including learner exposure, parental participation, and socioeconomic background, influence the first-year experiences of rural university students. Additionally, they argue that although students at rural schools may readily adjust to their hometown, they often struggle to adjust to campus life.

Contrarily, students from urban high schools may find it more difficult to adapt to the rural communities where their colleges are located. However, they typically adapt to university life without any issues, however there may be some restrictions based on the university's caliber. The paper suggests partnering with universities to allow them to supervise and guide specific high school activities, ensuring quality in rural educational institutions at both the high school and university levels, and employing career counselors to assist students. The paper suggests partnering with universities to allow them to supervise and guide specific high school activities, ensuring quality in rural educational

institutions at both the high school and university levels, and employing career counselors to assist students (Uleanya, 2017).

High teacher turnover rates and shortages of experienced teachers often making it difficult for rural students to provide individualized learning and mentorship. There may be difference in how students coming from rural areas are prepared and guided for the education in universities. Like they didn't have enough access to technology and resources for standardized tests, and different college admission procedure. Mowreader (2024) highlights that rural students face many challenges like financial challenges, limited college readiness resources and long distance institutions which hinder their academic success. According to Kutty (2014) and Chea (2015), they would put in a lot of effort in studies and try to adapt techniques used by college and they try to ask help from the instructors and peers.

Sikes (2018) and Wilson et al. (2016) discovered that students coming from rural areas are unable to make friendships with people who are from rural areas, they are looking to find the friends who are from the rural areas. The literature's findings indicate that first-year students expressed dissatisfaction about a heavier workload compared to their high school counterparts. They talked about how stressful university coursework is. They have a lot of academic work to complete in the smallest amount of time. Many participants claim that the university workload is killing them, with numerous deadline-driven tasks and early lectures.

For rural students pursuing higher education, financial challenges like high cost of living in urban areas and high tuition fee is a major challenge. These students need special support from families to continue higher education. Another issue is that educational technology, especially in rural institutions, is occasionally out of date since replacement money is insufficient. Rural students may not be exposed to a wide range of sources and are unable to do independent study on subjects due to a lack of educational technology. The lack of educational technology in the majority of rural schools makes it challenging for students to adjust when they do find it (Nyatuka, 2019). Cultural and socioeconomic challenges such as poverty, language barriers and cultural barriers it have impact on educational experience of rural students (Hallmark et.al, 2024).

Last but not least, a large number of participants in Morton et al.'s (2018) survey expressed that they are concerned with about academic preparation. According to them they feel less prepared them the fellows from urban areas may result in social isolation. In order to make students feel comfortable and confidence the researcher mentioned that it is critical for the educational institutions in rural settings to start empowering student's early.

2.8   Research Gaps

The previous researches addresses various difficulties faced by students coming from rural areas when coming to college or university but it was unclear about the coping mechanism used by these students to get over from these difficulties. Mowreader (2024) highlights that rural students face many challenges like financial challenges, limited college readiness resources and long distance institutions which hinder their academic success, but the study didn't discussed about the coping mechanism used by students to overcome challenges. The review of literature highlighted the value of institutional support system like mentorship programs and academic support services but it didn't go into details about how these resources were helpful for the students coming rural areas into urban areas for higher education. Morton et al.'s (2018) mentioned about the importance of educational support programs but details are not mentioned about how programs will help students to overcome challenges. Despite a brief discussion of the difficulties rural students encountered in integrating into society in the literature, little was known about the exact factors affecting social integration challenges in urban university environments.

2.9   Critical Summary

A comprehensive overview of the difficulties experienced by rural students, their coping strategies and institutional support system is given by the literature on their transfer from rural to urban areas for higher education. Academic, Social, financial and psychological challenges which hinder them from adjusting into higher education institutions are noted in the studies. Students coming from rural areas are unprepared to fulfill the demands of higher education because of various academic challenges including rote based learning, technological barriers and language barriers. Social integration problems, such as cultural challenges, trouble in adjusting with in new cultural

environment. Lower test results could result from rural student's limited access to high-quality education.

Additionally, they might be less exposed to academics at the university level, which might discourage them from considering attending college. Numerous studies have demonstrated that using English as the primary medium of instruction in rural universities hinders students' academic achievement, especially during their first year. Although they struggle to understand lessons taught in non-indigenous languages, these students gain from the use of creative language in the classroom since it helps them comprehend the many modules they are taking. Rural students may also encounter financial challenges to pursuing higher education since they might not be able to cover living expenses or tuition. Students feel alone in urban settings and prevent themselves for participating in extracurricular activities.

Rural students are affected by the economic factors like high fee structure, high living expenses, and not enough access to financial aids affects their ability to pursue higher education. Their ability to get success in higher education in urban settings is then complicated by psychological distress brought by these difficulties which results in stress and depression. Although students use coping strategies like part-time jobs, study groups, mentorship programs to overcome these challenges and to excel academically. It is emphasized that institutional support networks, such as financial help (scholarships), mentorship programs and inclusive classrooms environment are essential to help students to overcome challenges. However, their implementation, accessibility, and observable influence on the achievement of rural students are not adequately evaluated in the literature.

Furthermore, the researches identify the experiences of rural students they face during their transition period like socioeconomic and cultural context. Both the compounding effects of intersecting identities, including race, ethnicity, and gender, on students' higher education journeys and the role of rural identity in shaping their social and academic transitions are understudied. It is emphasized that institutional support networks, such as financial help (scholarships), mentorship programs and inclusive classrooms environment are essential to help students to overcome challenges. However, their implementation, accessibility, and observable influence on the achievement of rural students are not adequately evaluated in the literature.

Furthermore, the studies frequently oversimplify rural students' experiences while ignoring the subtle variations brought about by socioeconomic, cultural, and geographic contexts. Both the compounding effects of intersecting identities, including race, ethnicity, and gender, on students' higher education journeys and the role of rural identity in shaping their social and academic transitions are understudied. In summary, while the present collection of research offers insightful information, it ignores a number of important gaps. In order to provide a more comprehensive knowledge of rural students' transitions to urban higher education and to create more efficient support systems, future research should concentrate on longitudinal studies, intersectional analyses, and the evaluation of institutional interventions.

This chapter explores key themes from existing literature about communication, academic and social challenges and examined about the coping strategies used by students and the role of institutional support system. The literature underscored the importance of addressing these challenges through tailored interventions and support programs. This chapter laid for the ground work for the current study.

2.10 Empirical Review

The transition of students from rural to urban higher education institutions has been a topic of various studies in the past. All of those studies provide valuable insights into the challenges faced by students coming from rural areas to urban areas for higher education and also discussed about the coping strategies used by those students to overcome

challenges. This empirical review will focus on the methodologies and findings from the studies that highlight the challenges faced by students coming from rural areas.

Several studies highlighted that rural students face academic challenges due to the gap in educational quality between institutions of urban areas and rural areas. A study by Ali et.al (2021) found that in rural area students have lack of access to advanced equipment's which are easily available in urban institutions. The absence of advance equipment's leads to difficulties in adapting the academic demands of universities in urban areas. Students coming from rural areas also struggle to use technology like Lefoka and Tlali (2021) examined the transition of rural students and found that they faced a lot of difficulties when doing computer based assignments because of their less exposure to technologies.

The process of social integration is another challenge faced by students coming from rural areas. The literature suggests that rural students often experience social isolation due to difference in cultural backgrounds. Ahmed et al. (2021) discussed about rural students struggle to find connections in universities in urban areas because of difference in social lifestyles. Cultural differences affect students ability to integrate socially and make them feel isolated. According to Ganss (2016) rural students feel unprepared to deal with diversity in university settings.

Despite these challenges rural students also use some coping strategies to overcome challenges they face when entering to universities in urban settings. As reported by Masaiti et al. (2020) students coming from rural areas form study groups, seek guidance, many students engage in part time internships to overcome financial stress and some students use online platforms and peer support to learn about technological tools necessary for academic purpose.

Role of institutional support system has been highlights in various researches According to Vyse (2023) universities have developed mentorship programs for students. Universities provide scholarships to students and offer consoling services to students to overcome challenges. However researches indicated that these programs exists but there have not been evaluated. The studies by Mowreader (2024) and Nyatuka (2019)

emphasized on the assessment of these programs to determine how well they meet the needs of students coming from rural areas to urban areas to pursue higher education.

2.11   Theoretical Review

This research is informed by Gale & Parker's (2014) Transitions Framework, which offers a nuanced modern perspective on educational transitions, particularly relevant to students shifting from rural areas to urban universities. The framework categorizes transitions into three types;

- Liminal Transitions (marking periods of "in-between" identity (rural ⇄ urban, school ⇄ university),
- Linear Transitions, describing structured academic progression,
- Transformational Transitions, signifying deep shifts in identity, culture, and environment

In the context of this study, rural students entering urban higher education undergo transformational transitions, encountering significant changes in cultural norms and institutional expectations. By adopting this framework, my analysis focuses on how these students navigate identity, belonging, and academic adaptation. It complements earlier theories like Schlossberg's and Bourdieu's by providing an updated lens on how transitions are multifaceted and deeply experiential.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter contain data about research design, population, sample and sampling technique, instrumentation, pilot testing, data collection and data analysis.

3.1   Research Design

This research utilized a qualitative research design, specifically a phenomenological approach, to conduct a descriptive examination of the experiences of undergraduate students transitioning from rural to urban areas for the purpose of pursuing higher education. In order to comprehend ideas, viewpoints, or experiences, qualitative research entails gathering and evaluating non-numerical data (such as text, audio, or video). It can be applied to provide fresh research ideas or to obtain in-depth understanding of an issue (Bhandari, 2020). Creswell and Creswell (2018) stated that a collection of people's lived experiences of the same event are shared in a phenomenological design of research in order to comprehend reality from the participants' point of view.

3.2   Population and Sample

The target population for this study was consisted of 220 newly admitted female undergraduate students in fall 2024 semester from Faculty of Education at International Islamic University Islamabad Given the focus on students transitioning from rural to urban areas for higher education, the sample specifically included 15 students (female) who are originating from rural backgrounds Morse (1994) also argued for a minimum sample size of 6, Creswell (1998) suggested 5 to 25 participants for phenomenology, Bertaux (2014) recommended minimum samples of 15 in any type of qualitative investigation. Due to time constraints and the scope of the study, the research was limited to female students transitioning from rural to urban areas for higher education. Focusing on one gender

allowed for a more in-depth exploration of the experiences and challenges specific to rural female students, without compromising the quality of data collection and analysis. The sampling focused on undergraduate students who had completed their higher secondary schooling in rural areas and were currently enrolled in urban universities. This study employed purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling technique, to intentionally select participants who could provide rich and relevant insights into the transition of students from rural to urban areas for higher education. Participants were selected based on their direct experience with the transition process. They were from far- flung areas where they have limited educational resources. These students moved in urban areas to pursue higher education because universities were not available in their hometowns. A total of 15 students participated in the study. These 15 students are from; Sohawa (AJK), Ayun (Chitral), Singor (Chitral), Numb (Bagh, AJK), Ghizer (Gilgit) and Inzari (KPK). The sample size was deemed sufficient when data saturation was achieved, meaning no new information was emerging. Ethical considerations such as informed consent and confidentiality were strictly adhered to throughout the research.

3.3. Instrument

Researcher conducted interviews for data collection. For the development of interview questions researcher reviewed previous literature and contacted to teachers and fellows for taking instructions. Questions of the interview was designed to get insight into participants experience when entering to the universities of urban areas to pursue higher education. Interview guide was discussed with the four experts from international Islamic university Islamabad and was modified according to the suggestions of experts. Deeper examination of ideas and emotions is made possible by open-ended questions, which elicit expanded responses as opposed to straightforward yes/no responses. Usually starting with "how," "what," or "why," these inquiries compel the respondent to provide more details. Open-ended inquiries have several benefits and significantly improve communication in a variety of contexts. You promote more in-depth contemplation and critical thinking by eliciting expansive answers. By encouraging people to express their ideas, emotions, and experiences in greater detail, this method promotes an atmosphere of sincerity and trust (Ramos, 2024). Interview was consisted of 28 statements. Indicators of the interview questions was adaptation of the learning environment, social integration challenges,

communication challenges, coping strategies, institutional support system. Questions were designed to elicit detailed and comprehensive responses from participants.

3.4 Procedure (Validity, Pilot testing, Reliability)

Validity of instruments was determined through experts' opinion from International Islamic university Islamabad. Instrument was discussed with the four experts from international Islamic university Islamabad. instrument was modified according to the suggestions of experts to get better responses from the participants. Questions was organized according to objectives. A pilot test on 10 students was conducted to check the reliability of the questionnaire. In order to test and improve research techniques, collect preliminary data, and spot possible problems, a pilot study is a small-scale research project that is carried out prior to a full-scale study. It's an important step in the research process because it enables researchers to confirm their ideas for data analysis, technique, and research design before devoting a significant amount of time, money, and resources to a larger study (CLRN Team, 2025). Participants selected for the pilot testing were not be included in the final collection of data.

3.5 Data Collection

Data were collected by the personal visits of the researcher. Data were collected from 15 BS students who are coming from rural areas to urban areas for higher education. Morse (1994) also argued for a minimum sample size of 6, Creswell (1998) suggested 5 to 25 participants for phenomenology, Bertaux (1981) recommended minimum samples of 15 in any type of qualitative investigation. Data were collected through interview in Oct 2024. Researcher personally conducted interviews from students who are coming from rural areas. Necessary instructions and main purpose of research were discussed with participants personally. Purposive sampling technique was used during data collection. Participants referred researcher to other students who are coming from rural areas and helped researcher in data collection process. A non-probability sampling technique called "purposive sampling" Purposive sampling is 'used to select respondents that are most likely to yield appropriate and useful information and is a way of identifying and selecting cases that will use limited research resources effectively (Palinkas et al., 2015).

3.6 Data Analysis

Data were analyzed by thematic analysis. Researcher made themes from the data to analyze it. Thematic analysis is a method of qualitative data analysis that was first described by Joffe et.al 1970. Qualitative Research Methods in Mental Health and Psychotherapy: A Guide for Students and Practitioners, Wiley-Blackwell, 2012) but became more prominent at the end of the 1990s with researchers such as Boyatzis (1998) and Hayes (1997) as cited by Clarke (2012). An inductive approach was adopted for data analysis. The analysis begin with familiarization where all responses were read repeatedly to get in-depth understanding of the date. Initial codes were generated manually by identifying significant phrases. These codes were grouped into broader themes reflecting participants shared experiences in relation with academic challenges, communication challenges and social integration challenges, coping strategies and institutional support systems. All themes were reviewed and refined to ensure the accuracy. To ensure the credibility of data member checking was conducted by providing summary of findings to the participants which confirmed that the data is accurate and aligns with their experiences. In qualitative research, member checking is a strategy where researchers discuss their findings with the participants who provided the data, such as themes, interpretations, and narratives. Through this approach, participants can offer further context, question or improve the researcher's interpretations, and verify that the researcher has understood the material accurately. It improves the reliability and authenticity of qualitative research findings and is often referred to as respondent validation or participant validation (McLeod, 2024).

3.7 Ethical Consideration

Ethical issues were crucial in this study to guarantee the rights and welfare of participants are protected. Initially, every participant was given informed consent after being fully informed about the goal and methodology of the study. They were informed that their participation were entirely voluntary and they had the right to withdraw from the study. Identities of the participants were protected. The data were only be accessible to researchers who are actively involved in the study to preserve participant privacy and was not shared with the third party. All identifiable information was eliminated.

3.8   Conclusion

This chapter detailed the research design, sampling, technique, population, instrument and data collection technique. By using the qualitative approach this study explores the lived experiences of the students and their challenges related to academics, communication and social challenges. The chosen method of data collections helps researcher to gain insight of the participant's perspectives. This chapter also address ethical issues that researcher conducted research with respect and integrity

CHAPTER 4
DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATIONS

This chapter presents the analysis of collected data from open ended questionnaire. Thematic analysis technique was used for data analysis. Data were organized according to the objectives of study.

4.1 Academic Progression Challenges

Figure 4.1

Academic Challenges faced by students coming from rural area.

Communication Challenges

Adapting new environment

Struggle to use unfamiliar technology

Poor english language

Large Classroom size
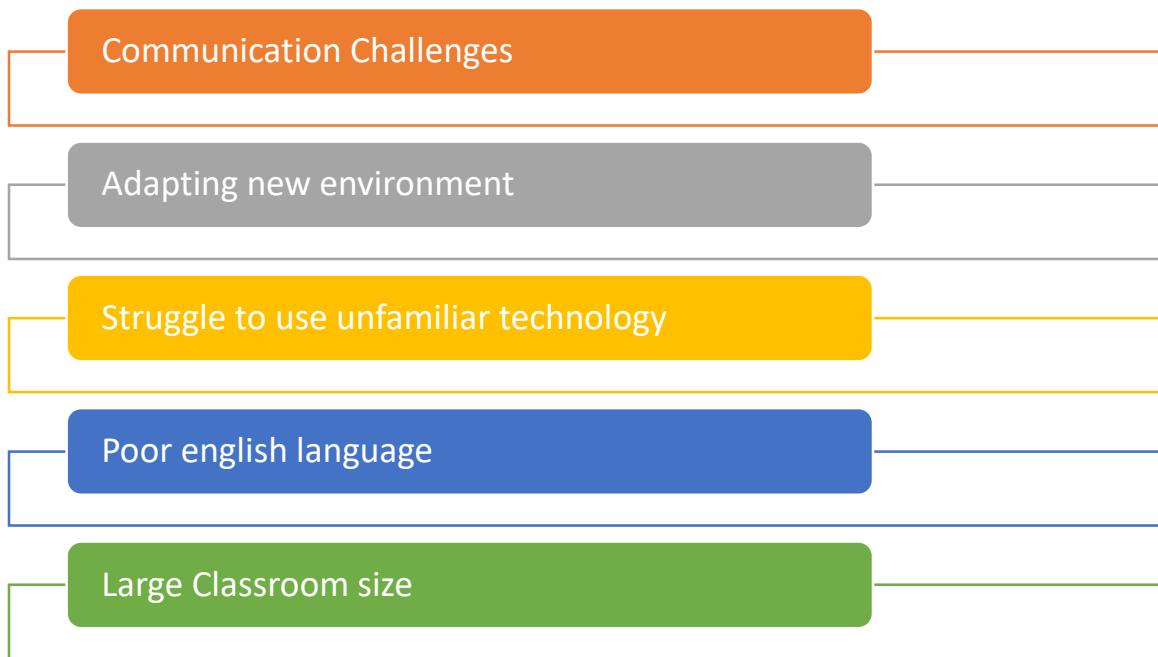
4.1.1 Academic Challenges

Students coming from rural areas said that they faced a lot of challenges when moving to urban areas for higher education because of the change in environment as one of the participant said that *''Rural schools and colleges do not focus on students to learn English language fluently like in urban cities and there are no facilities to learn computer in your secondary education. Therefore I faced lot of difficulties in my class like my classmate almost whole class can speak English fluently in normal speaking and also in academic studies and they know how to use all technology tools''.* Students stated that they

face challenges because of their language barriers and unawareness of technological tools. Another participant stated that ''*First is language barrier (accent and fluency) than communication as in rural setting we can't interact openly on any topic with teachers so we remain reluctant to communicate. Thirdly class difference are more prevalent in higher educational institute''.* Another participant said that '' *Transitioning from a rural higher secondary school to an urban university brought academic challenges such as adapting to a new learning environment with different teaching methods, facing language and communication barriers, and struggling with unfamiliar technology used for learning and assignments. These challenges required significant effort to overcome''.* They are of the view that if they were fluent in English then they will not face these challenges.

4.1.2   Specific Subjects and Skills Difficult To Understand

When students were asked about specific subjects and skills they find most difficult to understand they stated that English and Arabic was most difficult for them initially and subjects in which they have to make assignments and presentations with the use of computer because they didn't have enough technological skills. A student stated that '' *ICT (information communication Technology), Arts and humanities in rural education system they don't focus or encourage student's creativity they only focus on books''.* Another participant of the study stated that ''*When starting university, I found it most difficult to adjust to subjects requiring advanced analytical skills, critical thinking, or technical expertise, such as mathematics, research-based courses, or technology-related subjects. Adapting to new academic standards and expectations also posed a challenge''.* Another student stated that ''*All subject because all subjects are in English language I cannot understand English language easily''.*

4.1.3   Difference between Interaction with Instructors in University and College

Students stated that there instructors in rural areas focus on memorization whereas here instructors focus to make concept of students clear and their instructors at rural areas didn't use technology in the class while instructors of the university does. A student coming from rural area stated that ''*the teaching methods at my rural college were more traditional, with a focus on lectures and limited use of technology. In contrast, the university in the urban setting employed more interactive and modern teaching*

approaches, such as group discussions, online resources, and practical applications, which required quicker adaptation''. Another student stated that ''*In my area teachers use traditional method where as in university teachers try to involve us in group discussions and practical applications as well as they also try to use technology*''. Students also stated that teachers of universities in urban areas focus on the students with better communication skills while they ignore other students of the class. A participant said that ''*in my college teachers know all of the students in the class very well and focus on the needs of every student, but here teacher only focus on the students with better communication skills''*. Other participant stated that

4.1.4 Effects of Previous Background in University Education

Students coming from rural areas said that their previous background effected them badly when entering to universities in urban education because they didn't know about the use of technology and off course language barrier was there. A student stated that ''*my previous academic background affected my university education by creating gaps in foundational knowledge and skills, particularly in areas like technology, research, and communication. Adjusting to the faster-paced and more rigorous curriculum in the university was challenging, requiring extra effort to catch up''*. Another participant stated that *''like previously in my college there were not such facilities but teachers was cooperative and here teachers didn't pay attention at the needs of individual students. So because of the barriers with teachers I found it very difficult. And if a talk about communication so I agreed that my communication skills were not so good so that hurdles me. And there were very few students in the class''*. Another participant stated that ''*My rural high school background gave me a solid foundation but made it hard to adjust to university's fast pace, complex subjects, and use of technology. I had to quickly develop critical thinking, research skills, and digital literacy to keep up''*.

4.1.5 Academic Support Needed and Didn't Find at University

Students stated that they need guidance from teachers about the use of technology because didn't got it and they are of the view that there should be inclusive classroom environment in the universities because students are coming from different backgrounds here. A student stated that ''*When I started university in an urban area, I needed more*

personalized academic support, such as one-on-one tutoring or mentorship, to help me adjust to the new learning environment. Unfortunately, such support was often limited or hard to access, leaving me to navigate challenges on my own''. Another participant stated that ''*The very important thing which I needed at the time of entering university was about communication like if there is the arrangement of communication course or if there is inclusive environment in the class so that we from rural areas can get comfortable easily''.* Students also stated that they need scholarships but didn't get yet and they also complained about the facility of internet like one of the participant stated that ''*Internet access should be available for students but it is not available here so I've to spent my pocket money in internet packages for study purpose''.*

4.2   Social Integration Challenges

Figure 4.2

Social Challenges faced by Students Coming from rural areas

Making friends

Participating in class disscussions

Interaction with instructors

Cultural differences
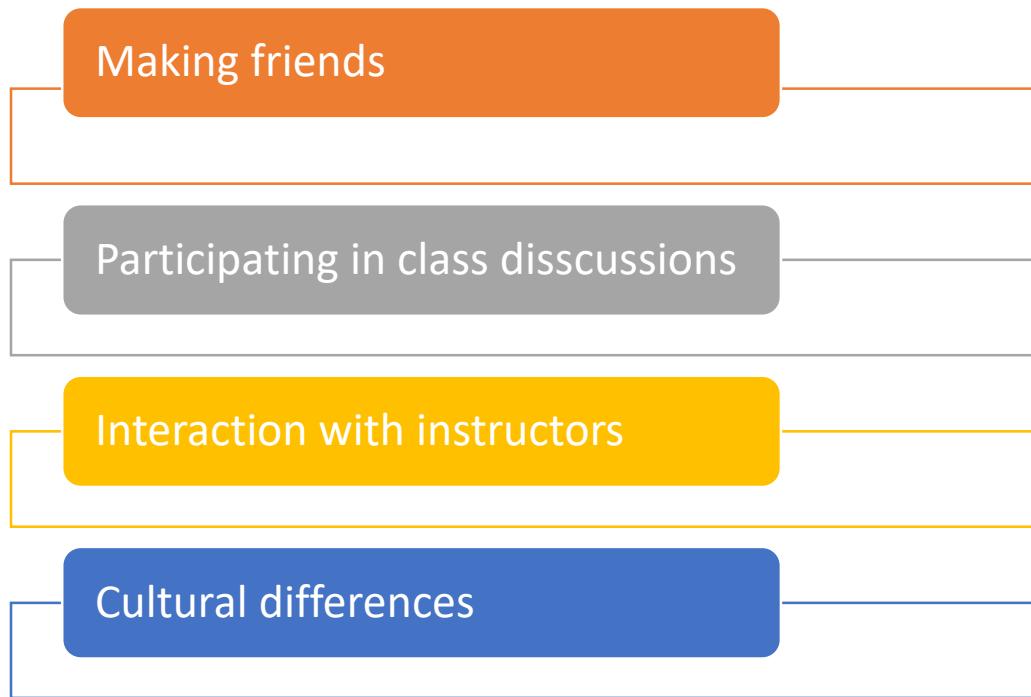
4.2.1   Experience of Making Friends or Building Social Networks

Students coming from rural areas stated that initially they are hesitant of making new friends in the university because of cultural differences and because of language

barrier they were reluctant to express their opinions as stated by the participant that ''*Well, making friends was very much difficult for me here because of my accent and language barriers I fell hesitant while talking with fellow's and other people across me because there was a lot of difference in my mindset and in the mindset of people here''*. Students stated that their fellow from urban areas are not supportive and they make fun of their accent a participant stated that ''*It was very difficult to make friends here so I am mostly alone, so I mostly stay in library''*. According to them their class fellows are not cooperative and their behavior demotivated them. A participant stated that ''*Making friends and building social networks in the urban university setting was both exciting and challenging. While the diverse student body provided opportunities to meet people, the fast-paced environment and larger class sizes made it difficult to form close connections. It required extra effort to find like-minded individuals and establish lasting friendships''*.

4.2.2 Aspects of University Culture Difficult to Adapt

Participants stated that their urban fellows are broad minded and bold which was difficult for them to digest. They also stated that student- teacher relationship also confuses them here as stated by the participant ''*Students are very much bold they talk to teachers easily whereas according to my point of view there should be respect between teachers and students but I think respect between teachers and students is missing here which was very difficult for me to adapt''*. Other students stated that because of difference in culture and language style they fell difficulties to adjust here ''*it was difficult for me because of language barriers and totally different environment''* stated by the participant. Participants are of the view that they are confused by the relation of teacher and student her as stated by a participant that ''*Students talk to teachers very boldly where are we feeling very reluctant to talk to teacher here students talk freely with the teachers I think respect is missing in the relation of teachers and students''*. Another participant stated that ''*Student teacher relationship confused me here it was difficult for me to talk with teachers freely like my urban fellows''*.

4.2.3 Difference between Interaction with Instructors in College and University

Students feel reluctant when communicating with instructors and peers because of language barriers. Their urban fellows make fun of them when they try to communicate

with them because of their accent. They revealed that teacher only prefer those students who are fluent in English and has confidence they feel alone in the class a participant said that ''*I fell hesitant to discuss even topic related things with my teachers because of language barrier and I also fell that teachers prefer to talk with those students who have good communication skills''*. Another participant said that ''*It is difficult because teachers only prefer those students who talk in the class they didn't pay attention to the students who are from backward area. So my interactions with teachers at my areas was very good but here I feel very much difficult to talk to teachers''*. A participant stated that ''*Interactions with instructors at university were more formal and self-initiated compared to school, where teachers were more accessible and closely involved in students' progress. At university, I had to take the initiative to approach instructors during office hours or via email for guidance, as lectures often catered to larger groups. While university instructors were knowledgeable and supportive, the emphasis was on independent learning, requiring me to be proactive in seeking help. This shift taught me to communicate more professionally and manage my academic responsibilities autonomously''*.

4.2.4   Experience where Felt Isolated and Misunderstood by Peers

Participants from rural areas discussed about their experiences where they felt misunderstood by their peers when doing presentations and when doing group projects because their poor English language skills ''*Coming from a rural background, I occasionally felt isolated or misunderstood by my peers, especially during discussions about urban lifestyles or cultural experiences I wasn't familiar with. For instance, conversations about trendy restaurants, city events, or public transport systems sometimes made me feel out of place. There were also moments when my simpler lifestyle or values were perceived as different, leading to unintentional stereotypes. However, over time, sharing my experiences and embracing the diversity around me helped bridge these gaps and foster mutual understanding''*. Another participant stated that ''*When using laptop for assignment I am not able to understand them because of language barrier and yes my communication skills are also not good to clear my point of view''*. A participant stated that ''*I sometimes felt isolated or misunderstood by my peers at university due to my rural background, especially when I struggled with certain technologies or academic discussions that seemed more familiar to students from urban areas''*. Participants face

problems when doing group projects they found it difficult to express themselves as stated by a participant ''*Yes In our group projects I couldn't convey my points to then so in result I have to take the task of their choice''*.

4.2.5 Coping Strategies Used to Integrate Socially

When students coming from rural areas were asked about coping strategies they stated that they tried to participate in class discussion and with the use of technology like by using mobile apps and they try to participate in group discussions and seek feedback from their instructors and peers to improve further as a participant stated that ''*To integrate socially into university life, I focused on improving my language skills through regular practice and engaging in conversations with peers. Actively participating in classroom discussions and group projects helped me build confidence and connect with classmates. I also joined student organizations and attended campus events to meet people with similar interests. Seeking support from mentors and utilizing university resources like workshops and counseling further eased the transition. By being open to new experiences and initiating interactions, I gradually built meaningful relationships and a sense of belonging''*. Another participant stated that ''*To integrate socially into university life, I focused on improving my language skills, actively participated in classroom discussions, joined clubs to meet peers, and sought support from academic advisors and peers when needed''*.

4.3　Communication Challenges

Figure 4.3

Communication Challenges faced by students coming from rural area

> Language Barriers

> Difficulty to understand complex ideas

> Poor accent

> Poor vocabulary

> Difficulty to ask questions
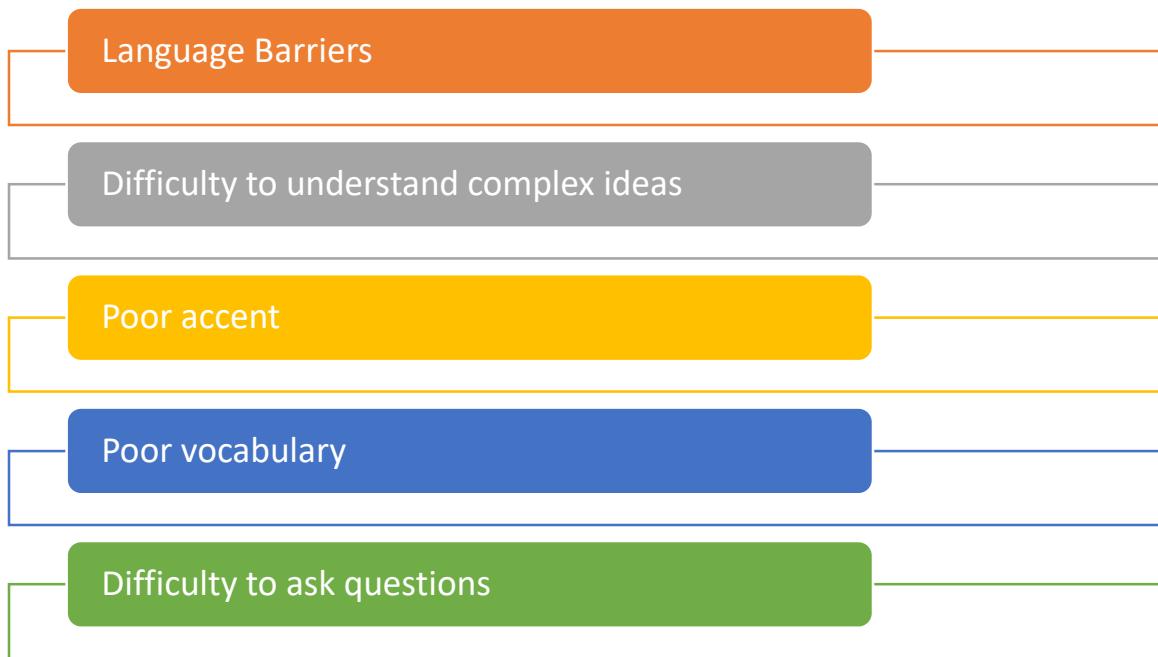
4.3.1　Communication Challenges When Engaging with Peers and Instructors

Participants stated that they fell hesitant when communicating with instructors and peers because of their poor accent and lack of confidence, many fellows make fun of them when they try to use words of English in their communication as a participant stated that ''*One of the main communication challenges I faced at university in an urban setting was adjusting to the fast-paced and often informal language used by peers, which included slang or regional dialects that I wasn't familiar with. This sometimes made classroom participation and peer interactions difficult. Additionally, the larger class sizes made it harder to engage with instructors one-on-one, leading to challenges in getting personalized feedback. Navigating group discussions also required adapting to different communication styles, which was initially overwhelming but became easier with time and practice''.* Participants also stated that large classroom size make it difficult for them to communicate ''*Larger class size make it difficult for me to engage in the class and off course language barrier was there''*. Another participant stated that ''*I faced*

communication challenges such as language barriers, especially with academic jargon, difficulty participating in class discussions due to a lack of confidence, and sometimes struggling to connect with peers from different backgrounds''.

4.3.2 Comfortable when Participating in Class Discussions

Most of the participants stated that they were not comfortable when participating in class discussions because there of shyness, large class size, lack of confidence and poor accent. A participant stated that ''*I was initially hesitant and uncomfortable participating in class discussions or group activities due to my rural background and fear of being judged or misunderstood''.* Another participant stated that ''*When I first started university, I felt somewhat uncomfortable participating in class discussions or group activities. The larger class sizes and more formal academic setting made me hesitant to speak up, especially with peers who seemed more confident or experienced. I was also adjusting to the different communication styles and expectations of university-level discourse. Over time, however, I became more comfortable by gradually engaging in smaller group activities and seeking opportunities to contribute, which helped build my confidence and ease in larger discussions''.* A participant stated that ''*I was not very comfortable participating in class discussions or group activities when I first started university due to my inexperience and shyness in a new, larger setting''.*

4.3.3 Expressing Point Of View during Lecture

Students coming from rural areas found it challenging when expressing themselves during any class or group discussion. They have to find correct words before speaking. Sometimes they have good idea in their mind but they are unable to convey their ideas to others because of poor vocabulary as a result their urban fellows get dominated in any task. A participant stated that ''*Yes, I found it challenging to understand and express myself during lectures, especially with complex academic language and unfamiliar terms. It was hard to keep up with the pace of discussions and explain my thoughts clearly''.* Another participant stated that ''*I was not very comfortable participating in class discussions or group activities when I first started university due to my inexperience and shyness in a new, larger setting''.*

4.3.4 Development of Communication Skills

Participants of the study stated that they are trying their level best to develop their communication skill by participating in class discussions, active listening, seeking feedback, Peer interaction and practice. They are also using mobile applications to improve their language skills. A participant stated that ''*Yes, at university, I developed my communication skills, particularly in expressing ideas more clearly and engaging in academic discussions. However, I faced difficulties initially, such as adapting to formal academic language and overcoming my hesitation in speaking up during lectures or group activities. Additionally, the diverse communication styles of peers sometimes made it challenging to connect. To address these issues, I focused on actively participating in discussions, seeking feedback, and practicing public speaking, which gradually boosted my confidence and helped refine my communication skills''.* Another participant said that ''*initially I faced a lot of difficulty in understanding lectures and while communicating with peers and instructors but now I'm trying to improve myself through reading lectures material before my class and through active listening''.* Students try to read the provided lecture material before class it helps them to participate actively in the classroom and through that they develop their communication skills. A participant stated that ''*I feel hesitant while communicating with peers but I am improving my communication through YouTube videos and mobile applications''.*

4.3.5 Instances Where Find Difficulties in Group Discussions

Participants of the study discussed about their experience of group discussion like many of them said that they feel difficulty to convey their ideas effectively because of language barrier, they have to find some words to talk to them because of poor vocabulary and poor accent a participant stated that ''*in group discussions, I occasionally faced difficulties in articulating my ideas clearly, especially when peers were more vocal or confident. At times, I struggled to find the right words or felt hesitant to interrupt others, which made it hard to contribute effectively. Additionally, differing communication styles and the fast pace of some discussions left me feeling unsure about when to speak up. To overcome these challenges, I worked on preparing my points in advance, practicing active listening, and gradually becoming more comfortable asserting myself during group interactions''.* Other participants stated that because of lack of confidence they feel

reluctant to express themselves in group discussion and these discussions are dominated by urban fellows always stated ''*One instance was during a group project when I hesitated to share my idea, and a dominant group member interrupted me, making me feel belittled and unheard''.* Another participant stated that ''*When teachers gave us group presentations I fell hesitant to discuss my ideas with fellows at the end I do the part which my fellows ask me''.*

4.4 Coping Strategies

Figure 4.4

Coping strategies used by students coming from rural areas to cope up challenges

| Joined study groups |
| Mobile applications |
| Seeking one on one guidence frrom instructor |
| Class participation |
| Active listening |
| Seeking feedback |
| Understanding helping material before lecture |
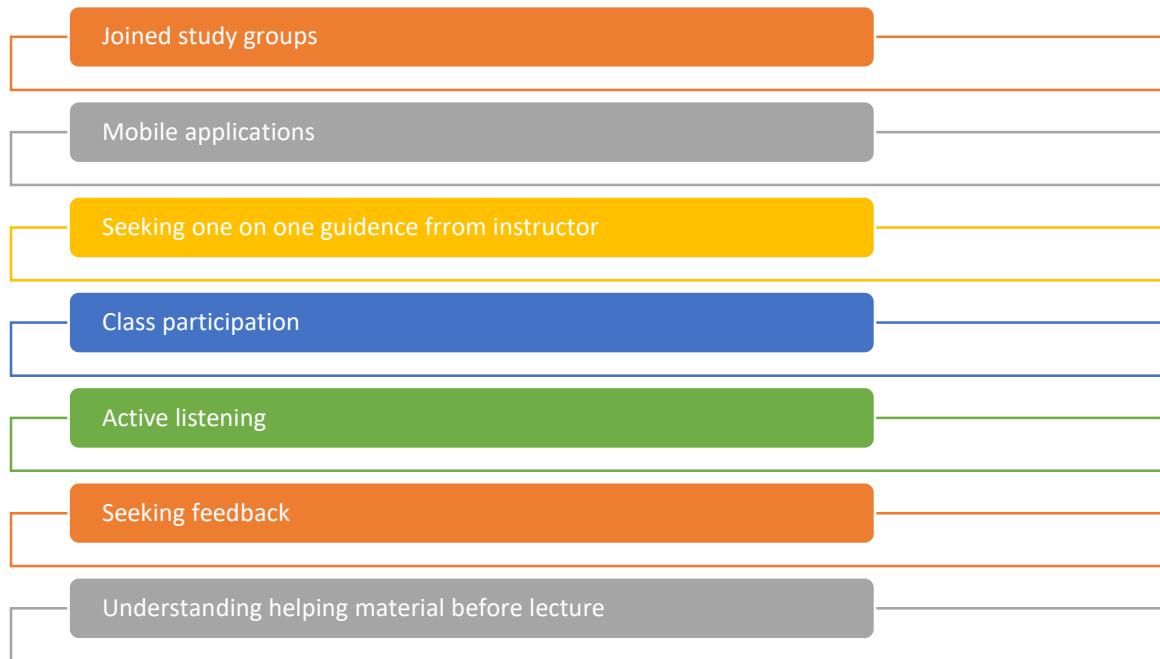
4.4.1 Strategies to Overcome Academic Challenges

Students use different coping strategies to overcome academic challenges strategies like class participation, Improving language skills, Participation in study groups, Interactions with peers, Class participation, seeking support from peer. A participant stated that ''*to overcome academic challenges during my transition to university life, I focused on improving my language skills by reading academic texts and practicing writing to enhance clarity and coherence. I actively participated in classroom discussions to build confidence and better understand course material. I also formed study groups with peers*

to exchange ideas and clarify difficult concepts. Seeking support from tutors and academic advisors helped me stay on track with assignments and develop effective study strategies. Additionally, utilizing university resources like workshops and libraries helped me manage the academic workload more effectively.'' Another participant stated that *''To overcome academic challenges, I focused on improving my language skills, actively participated in class, sought support from professors and peers, and joined study groups to better understand the material and boost my confidence.''* Some participants stated that they try to read the provided material before class it helped them a lot. A participant stated that ''*I focused to improve my language skills by reading English books and tried to participate in class discussions and yes I took help from my fellows like we created study groups so that helped us a lot''.*

4.4.2 Strategies to Address Social Integration Challenges

Students coming from rural areas tries some coping strategies to excel socially in new atmosphere. They try to interact with peers, practice to speak difficult words of English language, try to participate in group discussions to convey their point of view and through active listening they try to improve their language. A participant stated that '' *to address social integration challenges, I made a conscious effort to engage in small group discussions and attend social events organized by the university. I actively sought opportunities to interact with peers from diverse backgrounds, which helped me overcome initial feelings of isolation. With instructors''.* Students try to boost their confidence to excel socially. A participant stated that '' *To address social integration challenges, I made a conscious effort to engage in small group discussions and attend social events organized by the university. I actively sought opportunities to interact with peers from diverse backgrounds, which helped me overcome initial feelings of isolation. With instructors, I started attending office hours and participating more in class to build rapport and establish a connection. I also focused on being open-minded and adaptable, learning to navigate different communication styles and cultural differences, which gradually helped me feel more integrated into both social and academic settings''.*

4.4.3 Role of Family to cope up with the Challenges

Families of students coming from rural areas play an important role to help them to cope up with the challenges. Family help them financially and emotionally. Participants stated that their family encourage and motivate them to study in the universities and off course financial help of the family matters a lot they face a lot of financial challenges because of expensive food and hostel rents. A participant stated that *''Family plays a crucial role in helping me cope with university challenges by providing emotional support, encouragement, and practical advice. Their understanding and reassurance help alleviate stress during tough times, while their guidance often offers perspective on academic or personal issues. Additionally, family can be a source of financial assistance and motivation, reminding me of my goals and the bigger picture when challenges feel overwhelming. Their constant presence, even from a distance, creates a sense of stability and comfort amidst the demands of university life''.*

4.4.4 Role of Friends to Overcome Challenges

Friends play an important role to motivate these students because they are far away from their families. Some of the participants have very good experience with their friends like they stated that their friends helped them to make assignments and presentations, they share notes with them, guide them about the use of technology and provided them safe space to discuss their problems one of the participant stated that ''*Friends played a crucial role by offering emotional support, sharing experiences, and providing advice, helping me feel more connected and less isolated during the challenges of university life''.* Some of the students have negative experience with the fellows belonging from urban areas a participant stated that ''*I didn't get any help from my friends here''.* Another participant stated that ''*Making friends was challenging but some are good ones they provide me safe space to discuss problems they give me advice to overcome challenges''.*

4.4.5 Techniques to Improve Communication Skills

Students coming from rural areas use different techniques to improve their communication skills. They try to listen actively to the lectures of the instructors, participate in class discussions, using mobile apps to improve communication skills, practice and then they stated that they seek feedback from their instructors and peers to

improve. One of the participant stated that ''*to improve my communication skills in the university setting, I practiced active listening during lectures and group discussions, ensuring I fully understood others before responding. Participating in class presentations and group projects helped me build confidence in public speaking and teamwork. I also joined student organizations and attended workshops focused on effective communication. Seeking feedback from peers and professors and regularly reflecting on my interactions allowed me to identify areas for improvement. Engaging in diverse conversations with people from different backgrounds also enhanced my ability to communicate effectively in various settings''*. Another participant stated that ''*To improve my communication skills, I practiced active listening, participated more in class discussions, sought feedback from peers and instructors, and engaged in group activities to build confidence in expressing my ideas''*. And a participant stated that ''*Practicing presentations, active listening, and asking clarifying questions helped improve communication skills''*.

4.4.6 Skills Wished To Have Learned Before Coming to University

Most of the participants discussed about some specific skills they wished to have learned before entering to the university like English language skills, technological skills, communication skills. A participant stated that ''*I wish I've learned better English language before and yes how to use computer to make assignments If I knew about these things before then I think I can cope up with other challenges easily''*. Another participant stated that ''*before university, I wish I had learned better time management, effective study techniques, and financial literacy skills. Managing multiple deadlines and balancing academic, social, and personal responsibilities can be overwhelming without these skills. Additionally, understanding how to budget, save, and manage expenses in an independent setting would have made the transition smoother. Stronger self-discipline and stress management techniques would also have been beneficial in coping with the challenges of university life''*.

4.4.7 Support Services provided by the University

When asked about support service provided by the university almost all of the participants stated that they didn't receive any specific support services from their university. University only did one orientation program but according to the participants

that one program was not enough for them there should be something specifically done for those students who are coming from the rural areas. A participant stated that ''*Orientation programs were organized but that was not effectives something more effective should be done''*. Participants also stated that university offer scholarships but they didn't receive yet and when we go to coordinator office they talk to us rudely ''*Coordinators are very rude if we need some help they didn't listen to our problems''*. A participant stated that ''*I didn't find any support here they only did one orientation program according to me that was not enough''*.

4.4.8 University Support System to Address Challenges

Almost all of the participants stated that they didn't get any support from university as per their need as stated by the participant ''*I didn't get any support. Yes orientation program was organized but I think that was not very much effective.''*. a participant stated that ''*No, I didn't find any support orientation program was there and no other support system was available for us''* While one participant said that ''*I find the university's support systems, like counseling, tutoring, and orientation programs, quite effective in addressing my challenges. They provided guidance, helped me improve my skills, and made me feel more confident in navigating university life''*.

4.5 Institutional System Available for Students
Figure 4.5

Institutional Support system available for students coming from rural areas

Scholarship but not acessible

Orientation program but not effective

Staff is not cooperative

4.5.1 University Administration

Most of the participants of this study stated that the behavior of staff is not so good with them when they go to administration to answer there queries they talk to them very rudely and because of their behavior they get demotivated to study in the university a participant stated that ''*Administrations behavior was very rude and when it comes to department they also behave very rudely with us yes if teachers support then they help us''*. Another participant stated that ''*Oh administrative staffs behavior was very much rude with students. When I go to them for any issue I fell demotivated to study in the university''*. A participant stated that *''they helped us to solve our problem but their behavior is very rude''*.

4.5.2 Staff and Advisor Addressing Unique Needs

Participants stated that staff's behavior is very rude with them whenever they go to the administrative staff to address their needs they took very much time to solve problems and talk with students very strictly as stated by a participant ''*Yes they check our unique needs but they take time students with reference can get help immediately''*. According to

the participants mostly students felt demotivated because of the behavior of staff whenever they visited to the advisory office. A participant stated that ''*they only prefer those students who have connection with them otherwise they talk very rudely.''*

4.5.3 Effects on Emotional and physical health

Participants of the study discussed about the effect of coming far away from their hometowns. They stated that it was very much difficult for them living alone from family causes stress, anxiety which decreased their physical activities. Most of the participants stated that they got ill because of change in atmosphere and temperature. They face challenges to adjust in urban areas ''*We are living in very high distance from our hometown then we can't interact with our family in daily routine and we also having lot of other issues so these problems effect our emotions when our emotions are breaks then we cannot stable physically''.* Another participant stated that ''*I fell very depressed I miss my family members here it affected my physical and emotional wellbeing''.*

4.5.4 Difficulties Faced While Managing Time

Students coming from rural areas face difficulty when managing time. They have to manage their hostel life with university life. A participant stated that ''*The main difficulties I face in managing time between academics, personal life, and other responsibilities are balancing study hours with social activities, handling multiple deadlines at once, and finding time for self-care amidst a busy schedule''.* Other participants also stated that they face difficulties because of odd buss schedule ''*buss timing is very odd due to which I have to spent whole day in university''.*

4.5.5 Financial Challenges

Students coming from rural areas face financial challenges because according to them hostels are very much expensive and food related issues are also there they sometime had to buy food from them and sometimes they had to take internet packages due to which they had to take extra money from their parents a participant stated that *after moving to an urban area for higher education, financial challenges often include managing higher living costs, such as rent, food, and transportation, alongside tuition fees. Limited access to part-time jobs, unexpected expenses, and the need to support family back home can further strain finances.*

4.5.6 Other Personal Challenges

Participants of the study discussed about some other issue like bus schedule, internet facility etc. ''*A participant said that managing busy schedule of hostel with studies''*. Another participant said that ''*Many others challenges like students didn't talk to us because we are from rural area and teachers many of the teachers didn't know about our names''*. Students discussed about other challenges related to time management because of bus schedule and homesickness,

4.6 Visual Representation of Responses of Participants
Figure 4.6

Word cloud of participants responses on transition challenges

Figure 4.6 presents the word cloud generated from participant's responses to open ended questions about their transition from rural to urban area for higher education. It shows the most frequently used terms by students describing their social, academic and communication challenges after transitioning to universities in urban settings. It also show about some institutional strategies used by students and institutional system available to students to overcomes these challenges.

4.7 Conclusion

This chapter presented a detailed analysis of collected data. Through thematic analysis key patterns emerged and it sheds lights into the difficulties students face in

adapting to new learning environment, communication challenges, social integration challenges and also highlights about the coping strategies and institutional support system available for students to overcome challenges.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, FINDINGS, DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary

This study was conducted to examine the challenges faced by students when entering to urban areas for higher education. The objectives of this study were to Identify the academic progression challenges faced by undergraduate students when transitioning from higher secondary schools in rural areas to universities in urban area, Explore the social integration challenges experienced by undergraduate students when interacting with peers and instructors in an urban area, Investigate the communication challenges experienced by undergraduate students when interacting with peers and faculty members in university settings located in urban areas, Explore the coping strategies used by undergraduate students to overcome the academic, social integration and communication challenges and to Identify the institutional support systems available to reduce the challenges encountered by students in the university.

The study was delimited to the female BS students who are coming from rural areas to urban areas to pursue higher education. Quantitative research design was used and study was descriptive in nature and descriptive approach was used. The instrument of this study was open ended questionnaire consist of 28 statements. The validity of the instrument was checked by expert's opinion. Opinions of senior faculty members were taken to ensure the validity of the instrument. The target population for this study was consist of newly admitted (220) female undergraduate students from faculty of education in fall 2024 semester at International Islamic University Islamabad Given the focus on students transitioning from rural to urban areas for higher education, the sample specifically included 15 students who are originating from rural backgrounds. This study utilized snowball sampling, a non-probability sampling technique, to recruit participants Snowball sampling is particularly useful for reaching populations that may be difficult to identify or contact directly. This study employed purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling technique, to intentionally select participants who could provide rich and relevant insights into the transition of students from rural to urban areas for higher education. Participants were selected based on their direct experience with the transition process. They were from

far- flung areas where they have limited educational resources. These students moved in urban areas to pursue higher education because universities were not available in their hometowns. The data were analyzed by using thematic analysis.

5.2 Findings

The following were the findings of the study;

First research question was ''What are the lived experience of undergraduate students regarding academic challenges while changing their learning environment from rural higher secondary schools to universities in urban area'' and findings related to this question are follows;

   I. Students faced significant challenges when adapting learning environment in universities in urban settings they are coming from the areas where teachers use traditional teaching methods with no innovations and in urban settings teachers use interactive and technology driven teaching methods.
  II.   Poor accent of English hindered their participation in classroom discussions and success academically.
 III. Additionally limited exposure to technology in their colleges in rural settings created difficulties in using technology and online learning platforms and digital tools like MS word and PowerPoint when making assignments and presentations.

Second research question was ''How do undergraduate students experience and navigate social challenges when interacting with peers and instructors in an urban area'' and findings related to this question are as follows:

   I. Students initially experienced isolation Because of their cultural difference and communication gaps with peers and faculty members in urban settings.
  II. Challenges related to English language accent and cultural norms created barriers for them to make connections with peers and faculty members in urban settings.

Third research question was "What communication challenges experienced by undergraduate students when interacting with peers and faculty members in university settings located in urban areas" findings related to this question are as follows:

I. Students faced communication challenges, including lack of confidence when participating in classroom discussions because it is dominated by urban peers.

II. They also fell difficulties when doing group projects because of the English language barrier they feel difficulty to express their ideas meaningfully.

Fourth research question was ''How do undergraduate students of rural areas cope with the challenges they encounter during the transition to university in urban area" findings related to this question are as follows:

I. To overcome challenges, students adopted strategies like improving English language skills through practice, using mobile apps and with the help of peers.

II. They also try to participate actively in classroom discussions and ask questions from faculty members to bridge the gaps.

III. Additionally their family help them financially and friends help them emotionally to overcome social challenges.

Fifth research question was "What are the experiences of undergraduate students from rural areas regarding institutional support systems designed to help them to reduce the challenges they encounter in the university'' findings related to this research question are as follows:

I. Institutional support, such as orientation programs are available for new students but they perceived as in sufficient by students.

II. Administrative staff check unique needs of the students but they take time and according to students their behavior is very rude.

III. Students demand for more tailored programs to address specific challenges so it could be helpful for students who are coming from rural areas in urban settings for higher education.

5.3   Discussion

Students face both opportunities and significant challenges when they move from rural to urban universities for higher education. The purpose of this study was to investigate students' strategies for dealing with academic, social, and communication challenges, coping strategies they use as well as the institutional support network that is accessible to

them. The results of this study are consistent with previous studies, offering a more profound comprehension of the real-life experiences of students undergoing this transition.

Findings of the study revealed that, students from rural areas encounter academic challenges when they transition to urban universities. Due to their rural college's lack of exposure to innovative teaching techniques and technology resources, students feel unprepared for the collaborative and independent learning environment of urban universities. These results are in line with those of Mbatha and Ntuli (2023), who point out that conventional teaching techniques and a lack of technology resources are major obstacles to academic performance for students attending educational facilities in urban areas. The transition from rote memorization to conceptual learning is also difficult for children from rural areas, according to Ahmed et al. (2021), which increases stress and academic pressure. Participants in this study highlight difficulties with language proficiency and technology use, which affects their ability to participate in class and finish assignments. According to Eusafzai and Suleman's (2024) research, students from rural areas have significant challenges in higher education due to limited technological exposure and language challenges.

For students from rural areas, social integration has become a challenge. These challenges include cultural disparities, social network formation difficulties, and a sense of isolation. Because urban and rural environments differ in communication, lifestyle, and social standards, study participants reported feeling isolated. These results align with Chen and Feng's (2019) research, which indicated that students from rural areas feel socially isolated and nervous when they engage with their fellows belonging from urban areas. According to the study's participants, cultural shock, as defined by Marcus and Krupnick (2017), is shown in their inability to adjust to the social culture of urban campuses and form lasting relationships. Urban campuses can be terrifying due to their new environment which can cause isolation and can reduce the sense of belonging. In contrast, Heinisch (2018) found that many rural students experienced a strong sense of belonging after engaging in student organizations and cultural groups, showing that active involvement can reduce social anxiety and aid smoother integration. This is something not commonly observed in this study.

Communication challenges also emerged as the main challenge for the students coming from rural areas to urban areas for higher education due to difference in language and communication style. The participants of the study highlighted their discomfort when participating in class discussions and expressing their ideas in classroom which is aligned with the findings of Pheko et al. (2014). The fear of being judged by their fellows because of their language skills cause hesitation to engage actively in academic and social conversations. Moreover the difference in nonverbal communication and classroom dynamics between institutions of rural and urban area further increased these challenges. This supports the observations of Ahmed et al. (2021) who noted the impact of cultural and linguistic difference on students coming from rural areas ability to communicate effectively in urban academic environment. In contrast Fashiku (2017) suggested that communication effectiveness in classrooms improves significantly when teachers use inclusive and flexible methods. His study noted that students became more confident when educators supported multilingual communication. Participants in this study didn't have this experience.

Despite these challenges students coming from rural areas also use coping strategies to overcome challenges they face during transition process. They form study groups, seeking support from the faculty members and peers were common strategies used by these students identified in this study. These strategies align with the findings of Masaiti et al. (2020) who emphasized the importance of peer support and mentorship programs in helping students coming from rural areas to navigate challenges. Additionally, family and friends also play a crucial role in providing emotional, financial and practical support to students to manage their stress. This is aligned with the research of Nyatuka (2019), which highlighted the importance of strong support system in facilitating the transition process of students. Unlike with findings of the study , Nonglait and Myrthong (2021) reported that many rural students in Meghalaya utilized formal counseling and student mentorship provided by the institution as primary coping tools indicating a more structured support environment than what participants of this study experienced.

The study revealed that institutional support system were not accessible to students or somewhere they are insufficient in addressing the specific needs of the students coming from rural areas. Participants of the study reported that they have limited access to academic counselling, support programs, and mentorship opportunities. This gap in

institution support is aligned with the findings of Giri and Gupta (2023), who mentioned for more tailored and inclusive support services for the students coming from rural areas in the universities in urban settings. The findings underscore the need for the universities to develop some initiatives such as language classes, technological trainings, and cultural integration programs. These measures can help students transitioning to universities in urban settings to bridge the gaps and to enhance the overall wellbeing and academic success of the students coming from rural areas. In contrast with Lefoka and Tlali (2021) found that universities offering bridging programs and tailored academic support significantly eased the transition for rural students. Their participants appreciated structured orientation, unlike students participated in this study who mostly relied on informal peer support.

The transition from rural to urban higher education institutions brings a lot of challenges for the students and they require a comprehensive support system. By aligning the findings of this with the existing literature it becomes evident that rural students face multiple challenges in academic, social and communication domains. However support network can play a crucial role to help them to adjust in different environment. Future researchers should focus on evaluating the effectiveness of institutional support program and exploring long term outcomes for students coming from rural areas to universities in urban settings.

5.4   Conclusions

Following are the conclusions:

I.   Students transitioning from colleges of rural areas to universities in urban settings face challenges when adapting new learning, social and cultural environment.

II.   Academic adjustment was a major concern for many rural students, particularly in adapting to new teaching styles, increased competition, and language barriers.

III.   Students face challenges because of English language barriers and they have limited technology exposure.

IV.   Communication difficulties, particularly in English or the dominant urban language, were often linked to low self-confidence and fear of judgment, further hindering classroom participation and peer interaction.

V. Academically they face difficulty to adjust initially because they are shifting into interactive and independent learning environment in universities in urban settings. Students feel isolated because of cultural differences and communication gaps.

VI. Social integration also posed significant challenges, with students expressing feelings of isolation, cultural mismatch, and difficulty in forming peer relationships

VII. Based on the coping strategies used by participants, policy makers can require bridge programs, mentorship initiatives, and orientation modules in universities that address transition gaps.

VIII. To overcome these challenges students adopt various coping strategies such as making groups for the study purpose, seeking support from faculty members and students to improve English language. Family and friends play crucial role to help them to cope up these challenges while institutional support system were often inaccessible and leaving gaps in meeting students specific needs.

IX. To address these challenges universities may implement targeted interventions including technology training programs, technology training programs. Universities in urban setting must create an inclusive and supporting learning environment to address the specific need of students coming from rural areas. By bridging these gaps universities can empower rural students to succeed academically and socially.

5.5 Limitations of the Study

The study has following limitations;

I. This study involved a limited number of participants due to time and resource constraints. While rich and detailed data were collected, the small sample size limits the generalizability of the findings to the broader population of rural students in urban universities.

II. The study was conducted within selected urban institutions in a particular region. Therefore, the experiences shared may vary from those of students in

other parts of the country or in different types of universities (e.g., private vs. public, urban vs. semi-urban).

5.6   Recommendations

Based on conclusions, following recommendations are suggested.

I.   Students face challenges because of English language barriers so universities may Implement English language courses (with speaking and writing practice) and conversation practice sessions to improve the fluency and confidence of students coming from rural areas.

II.   Students face challenges because they have limited exposure to the technology to overcome this challenge universities may provide workshops on using technological tools in first semester for academic purpose such as MS Word, PowerPoint and other online learning platforms to empower students.

III.   Most of students face challenges because of the cultural barriers, universities may organize events that promote inclusivity and understanding between rural and urban students, helping break down cultural barriers.

IV.   Special orientation programs may be arranged for students coming from rural backgrounds to help them to adjust with the academic, social and cultural environment of university in urban settings.

V.   Students face difficulty while paying fee of universities because of the high fee structure, universities may ensure the availability of need-based scholarships for students coming from rural backgrounds.

VI.   Students face difficulty while participating in classroom discussions teachers may try to engage those students in the classroom to boost their confidence.

VII.   Student find it challenging to adjust in the university environment and get demotivated so universities may arrange mentorship programs for new students to help them to reduce feelings of isolations and homesickness. It will also help them to create a sense of belongingness within the university environment.

5.7   Recommendations for Future Studies

Certain recommendations for future researches have been made:

I.   This study was delimited to the students of BS program future researches may be conducted to get feedback from the students of other programs.

II.   This study was delimited to only one university future researches may be conducted in all universities and can compare the experiences of students of public and private universities to identify variations.

III.   This study was delimited to the female students only future researches may conducted to get data from both genders.

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Questionnaire

Dear Respondent, I am a student of MS Education at International Islamic University. I am conducting research entitled "Transition of Students from Rural to Urban Area for Higher Education: Challenges and Prospects'' It will take a few minutes of your time. It is being assured that the information provided will be used for academic purposes only and will be kept confidential. Your response will be highly appreciated. Thank you for your assistance in collecting data.

Demographic Information

Name_____ (Optional)

Semester _____

Program_____

Department_____

Academic Progression Challenges

1. What kinds of academic challenges (adapting new learning environment, language and communication barriers and Technology challenges) did you encounter when you moved from a rural higher secondary school to university in urban setting?

    _____

    _____

    _____

2. What specific subjects or skills did you find most difficult to adjust to when you started your university studies?

    _____

    _____

    _____

3. Could you explain how your previous academic background affected your university education?

_____

_____

_____

4. How did the teaching methods at your rural college differ from those at the university in urban setting?

_____

_____

_____

5. What academic support did you need but couldn't find when you started university in an urban area?

_____

_____

_____

Social integration Challenges

6. How would you describe your experience of making friends or building social networks in the urban university setting?

_____

_____

_____

7. What aspects of university culture in the city were the most difficult for you to adapt to?

_____

_____

_____

8. How did your interactions with instructors differ between your school and the university?

_____

_____

_____

9. Can you share any experiences where you felt isolated or misunderstood by your peers due to your rural background?

_____

_____

_____

10. What coping strategies (Language improvement, Classroom participation, Peer interaction, Seeking support or any other) did you use to integrate yourself socially into university life?

_____

_____

_____

Communication Challenges

11. What communication challenges (language barriers, Classroom participation, and Peer interaction or any other) did you face when engaging with peers and instructors at university in urban settings?

_____

_____

_____

12. How comfortable were you in participating class discussions or group activities when you first started university?

_____

_____

_____

13. Did you find it challenging to understand or express yourself during lectures or conversations? If so, how?

_____

_____

_____

14. At university education have you developed communication skills and what difficulties you faced?

_____

_____

_____

15. Can you describe any instances where you faced difficulties in group discussions?

_____

_____

_____

Coping strategies

16. What strategies (Language improvement, Classroom participation, Peer interaction, Seeking support or any other) did you use to overcome academic challenges during your transition to university life?

_____

_____

_____

17. How did you address social integration challenges when interacting with your peers and instructors?

_____

_____

_____

18. What role do family play in helping you cope with challenges related to university life?

_____

_____

_____

19. What role do friends play in helping you cope with challenges related to university life?

_____

_____

_____

20. Can you share any techniques that helped you improve your communication skills in the university setting?

_____

_____

_____

21. Are there any skills you wish you had learned before university that would have helped you cope better?

_____

_____

_____

Institutional Support System

22. What types of support services does your university offer that have helped you adjust to academic life in an urban setting?

_____

_____

_____

23. How effective do you find the university's support systems (e.g., counseling, tutoring, orientation programs) in addressing your challenges?

_____

_____

_____

24. How university administration of staff helped you at university?

_____

_____

_____

25. How frequently do university staff or advisors check in with students to understand and address their unique needs?

_____

_____

_____

26. In what ways do you think your university could better support students from rural areas in overcoming challenges?

_____

_____

_____

Other Challenges

27. How has moving to an urban area affected your physical and emotional wellbeing? Please describe.

_____

_____

_____

28. What are the main difficulties you face in managing your time between academics, personal life, and other responsibilities?

_____

_____

_____

29. What financial challenges have you faced after moving to an urban area for higher education?

_____

_____

_____

30. What are some other personal challenges you face that are not covered above?

_____

_____

_____

_____

I sincerely appreciate the time and effort you have taken to complete this questionnaire. Your valuable insights and experiences will greatly contribute to understanding the challenges faced by students transitioning from rural to urban areas for higher education.

Thank you for your support!

Certificate of Validation

Certificate of Validation

Research title: ''Transition of Students from Rural to Urban Area for Higher Education: Challenges and Prospects''

By Syeda Waleeja Batool MS Scholar

This is certified that the attached research instrument developed by Syeda Waleeja Batool, MS Scholar in Teacher Education International Islamic University Islamabad have undergone through validation by me It is affirmed that the instrument designed in alignment with the research objectives, meet the standards for adequate face and content validity. The Open ended questionnaire have successfully passed the examination and proven substantially helpful for her thesis.

CERTIFIED BY:

Name: _Dr. Munazze Mahmood_

Designation: _Assistant Professor_

Institution: _IIU)_

Department: _ELM_

Signature: _____

Date: _14/12/24_

77

Certificate of Validation

Research title: ''Transition of Students from Rural to Urban Area for Higher Education: Challenges and Prospects''

By Syeda Waleeja Batool MS Scholar

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CERTIFIED BY:

Name: _Dr Fousia Ajmal_

Designation: _AP_

Institution: _IIUI_

Department: _Teacher Education_

Signature: _____

Date: _____

1

Certificate of Validation

Research title: "Transition of Students from Rural to Urban Area for Higher Education: Challenges and Prospects"

By Syeda Waleeja Batool MS Scholar

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CERTIFIED BY:

Name: Dr Zanira Akhlaq

Designation: AP (Teacher Educab)

Institution: IIU, Islamabad

Department: Teacher Education

Signature: _____

Date: 20 -11- 2024

1

Appendix C

Transcribed Responses of Participants

1. **What kinds of academic challenges (adapting new learning environment, language and communication barriers and Technology challenges) did you encounter when you moved from a rural higher secondary school to university in urban setting?**

P_1; Faced a lot of difficulties while interacting with peers Because of language barriers. And academic environment was also very much new for me and when it comes to do assignments in MS word that was also very challenging.

P_2; learning in English language was difficult for me.

P_3; Adapting totally new learning environment was totally challenging for me.

P_4; Yes I face language barrier and most important I don't know to use computer.

P_5; Adapting to a new learning environment, language barriers, and technology challenges.

P_6; Rural schools and colleges do not focus on students to learn English language fluently like in urban cities and there are no facilities to learn computer in your secondary education. Therefore I faced lot of difficulties in my class like my classmate almost whole class can speak English fluently in normal speaking and also in academic studies and they know how to use all technology tools.

P_7; I think language and low confidence level is most faced challenge.

P_8; First is language barrier (accent and fluency) than communication as in rural setting we can't interact openly on any topic with teachers so we remain reluctant to communicate. Thirdly class difference are more prevalent in higher educational institute.

P_9; Technology challenges, Communication Challenges.

P_{10}; Moving from a rural higher secondary school to a university in an urban setting presents various academic challenges, which can include Adapting to a New Learning Environment, Pace of Learning, Increased Expectations, Academic Rigor, Online learning platforms.

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P$_{11}$;   Transitioning from a rural higher secondary school to an urban university brought academic challenges such as adapting to a new learning environment with different teaching methods, facing language and communication barriers, and struggling with unfamiliar technology used for learning and assignments. These challenges required significant effort to overcome.

P$_{12}$;   Adapting new learning environment was a challenges for me.

P$_{13}$;   Adapting new learning environment, facing language challenges, communication barriers and yes ICT challenges.

P$_{14}$;   Firstly adapting new learning environment with all new people was very much difficult for me and yes technological challenges were also there we haven't used MS word or PowerPoint before so I need help of other fellows in every step.

P$_{15}$;   Adapting new learning environment was very much difficult for me.

2. **What specific subjects or skills did you find most difficult to adjust when you started your university studies?**

P$_1$;   Communicating with teachers and peers was a big challenge for me.

P$_2$;   Arabic.

P$_3$;   Arabic.

P$_4$;   I find economics subject difficult and also learning soft skills.

P$_5$;   English.

P$_6$;   ICT (information communication Technology), Arts and humanities.

In rural education system they don't focus or encourage student's creativity they only focus on books.

P$_7$;   All subject because all subjects are in English language I cannot understand English language easily.

P$_8$;   Computer applications and use of smart technologies.

P$_9$;   Accounting.

P$_{10}$;   when transitioning to university studies, several subjects or skills can be particularly challenging to adjust to, especially for students coming from a rural school background:

1. Critical Thinking and Analytical Skill

2. Problem Solving

3. Interpretation of Texts

4. Time Management.

P_{11};   When starting university, I found it most difficult to adjust to subjects requiring advanced analytical skills, critical thinking, or technical expertise, such as mathematics, research-based courses, or technology-related subjects. Adapting to new academic standards and expectations also posed a challenge.

P_{12};   Technological skill.

P_{13};   Courses related to technology.

P_{14};   English was very difficult subject for me.

P_{15};   English.

3. **Could you explain how your previous academic background affected your university education?**

P_{1};   like previously in my college there were not such facilities but teachers was cooperative and here teachers didn't pay attention at the needs of individual students. So because of the barriers with teachers I found it very difficult. And if a talk about communication so I agreed that my communication skills were not so good so that hurdles me. And there were very few students in the class.

P_{2};   my previous academic background affected my university education by creating gaps in foundational knowledge and skills, particularly in areas like technology, research, and communication. Adjusting to the faster-paced and more rigorous curriculum in the university was challenging, requiring extra effort to catch up.

P_{3};   My rural high school background gave me a solid foundation but made it hard to adjust to university's fast pace, complex subjects, and use of technology. I had to quickly develop critical thinking, research skills, and digital literacy to keep up.

P_{4};   yes off course my previous education was good because of our language and technology barriers we cannot take complete knowledge of specific subject in university life.

P$_4$;   Yes in my college we only focus to learn important things but here papers are conceptualized so I need to work on that I focus on lectures to make my concepts clear.

P$_5$;   yes it effects my current education I think only because of language barrier.

P$_6$;   It affects because I didn't have knowledge of computer and English language.

P$_7$;   my previous knowledge affects me badly because I didn't know about conceptual writing which creates hurdles for me.

P$_8$;   There were gaps in my foundational knowledge so it creates hurdles for me.

P$_9$;   yes I need more attention to understand English language subjects.

P$_{10}$;   lack of technological skills effects be badly in university.

P$_{11}$;   Previous I learned Arabic courses that helped me here.

P$_{12}$;   previous background affected me badly because I don't have technological skills and my English language was also very weak.

P$_{13}$;   in my school and college we have a subject of Arabic that helped me here only but when it comes to learning in English and using laptop for assignments it creates hurdles for me.

P$_{14}$;   Negative impact on me.

P$_{15}$;   in my college we only focus on bookish knowledge but here teachers focus on conceptual knowledge so it was challenging for me.

4. **How did the teaching methods at your rural college differ from those at the university in urban setting?**

P$_1$;   the teaching methods at my rural college were more traditional, with a focus on lectures and limited use of technology. In contrast, the university in the urban setting employed more interactive and modern teaching approaches, such as group discussions, online resources, and practical applications, which required quicker adaptation.

P$_2$;   In my college teachers were cooperative and they pay attention at every student where as in the university teachers even didn't know names of the full class and here teachers favor those students whose communication skills are good

P$_3$;   At my rural college, teaching was mainly lecture-based with less focus on independent learning. At university, the approach was more interactive, involving discussions, research, and extensive use of technology.

P$_4$;   teaching methods of rural college are more easier and understandable then teaching method of university because the teaching method of university are most advanced every student can't understand it easily.

P$_5$;   In my area teachers use traditional method where as in university teachers try to involve us in group discussions and practical applications as well as they also try to use technology.

P$_6$;   Teaching method here is difficult for me. Here teachers try to involve students in the class for me it was difficult because of language barrier.

P$_7$;   Smaller classes and traditional teaching methods at the rural college, versus larger classes and innovative methods at the urban university.

P$_8$;   Teacher there use traditional method whereas these teachers focus on class discussions and classroom size is also bigger here.

P$_9$;   in university there is less writing in boards and digital technology is also used in university which is not used at college.

P$_{10}$;   Yes it was different because teachers were cooperative there and here teachers didn't focus on individual needs of students.

P$_{11}$;   In university teachers focus in self-study to clear concepts but in rural these are not.

P$_{12}$;   here teachers focus on understanding the concept topic and in my college teachers focus on memorization.

P$_{13}$;   Teachers are highly educated here and focus on concepts.

P$_{14}$;   in my college teachers know all of the students in the class very well and focus on the needs of every student, but here teacher only focus on the students with better communication skills.

P$_{15}$;   in my college teachers focus on memorization but here teachers focus on clearance of concepts.

5. **What academic support did you need but couldn't find when you started university in an urban area?**

P_1;   When I started university in an urban area, I needed more personalized academic support, such as one-on-one tutoring or mentorship, to help me adjust to the new learning environment. Unfortunately, such support was often limited or hard to access, leaving me to navigate challenges on my own.

P_2;   The very important thing which I needed at the time of entering university was about communication like if there is the arrangement of communication course or if there is inclusive environment in the class so that we from rural areas can get comfortable easily.

P_3;   I needed more guidance on research skills, time management, and using technology effectively, but I couldn't find sufficient support for these areas when I started university.

P_4;   Internet access should be available for students but it is not available here so I've to spent my pocket money in internet packages for study purpose

P_5;   better class room and other facilities which are our first need like fans, internet, proper class room etc.

P_6;   English language course was not available at university and fee support i.e. scholarship should be available in universities.

P_7;   Guidance about how to use MS word to make assignments and about latest AI tools.

P_8;   English language courses should be available so that students can cope up with language challenge.

P_9;   I need one on one tutoring to adjust but couldn't Find that.

P_{10};   Access to internet.

P_{11};   English language learning courses should be offered to ne students.

P_{12};   Scholarships should be available.

P_{13};   Inclusive classroom environment should be in the university.

P_{14};   Guidance about how to use MS word, and PowerPoint.

P_{15};   Scholarships should be accessible for students.

6. **How would you describe your experience of making friends or building social networks in the urban university setting?**

P$_1$;   Making friends and building social networks in the urban university setting was both exciting and challenging. While the diverse student body provided opportunities to meet people, the fast-paced environment and larger class sizes made it difficult to form close connections. It required extra effort to find like-minded individuals and establish lasting friendships.

P$_2$;   Well, making friends was very much difficult for me here because of my accent and language barriers I fell hesitant while talking with fellow's and other people across me because there was a lot of difference in my mindset and in the mindset of people here

P$_3$;   Making friends and building social networks at the urban university was challenging at first due to the large, diverse environment, but over time, I connected through group projects, and shared interests.

P$_4$;   Yes it was challenging for me because I feel hesitant to talk to urban peers because of language barriers like our accent was very much different from them it was challenging for me.

P$_5$;   totally negative experience. Here our urban fellows even didn't support us when we are in any kind of trouble.

P$_6$;   Making friends here is difficult for me because here many fellows didn't talk with me because of the language barrier.

P$_7$;   in university making friends was very much difficult for me because of our cultural differences.

P$_8$;   It was very difficult to make friends here so I am mostly alone, so I mostly stay in library.

P$_{10}$;   Overall I have not bad experience, I made some good friends here.

P$_{11}$;   my classmates in the university that are from Cities are very cooperative so making friends for me here was not difficult.

P$_{12}$;   I found it challenging due to large and competitive environment.

P$_{13}$;   Making friends here was challenging for me because of different background.

P$_{14}$;   it was challenging for me because students from urban areas are very rude with the students who are coming from rural area.

P$_{15}$;   It was Difficult for me because of language barrier.

7. **What aspects of university culture in the city were the most difficult for you to adapt to?**

P$_1$;   Adapting to the fast-paced and competitive nature of university culture in the city was one of the most challenging aspects. The constant pressure to excel academically, and participate in extracurricular activities often felt overwhelming. Additionally, the cultural diversity, while enriching, required me to adjust to different perspectives and communication styles. Navigating the anonymity and independence of urban life, along with the high cost of living, added to the difficulty. Balancing these demands while building a sense of community took time and effort.

P$_2$;   Students are very much bold they talk to teachers easily whereas according to my point of view there should be respect between teachers and students but I think respect between teachers and students is missing here which was very difficult for me to adapt.

P$_3$;   Students talk to teachers very boldly where are we feeling very reluctant to talk to teacher here students talk freely with the teachers I think respect is missing in the relation of teachers and students.

P$_{4;}$ The most difficult aspects of university culture in the city were the fast-paced lifestyle, the emphasis on independence, and the diversity of people and ideas, which felt overwhelming at first.

P$_5$;   Adapting new learning environment and culture was bit difficult for me like it was very difficult for me to manage my extracurricular activities with curricular activities

P$_6$;   it was difficult for me because of language barriers and totally different environment.

P$_7$;   everything is difficult because everything was new for me.

P$_8$;   to adjust in the classroom which depends on English language.

P$_9$;   dress code

P$_{10}$;   to adapt fast paced learning environment was difficult for me.

P_{11};   everything was difficult because environment was very much change from the environment we are coming from.

P_{12};   Student teacher relationship confused me here it was difficult for me to talk with teachers freely like my urban fellows.

P_{13};   due to my cultural difference it was difficult for me to adjust with the university culture easily

P_{14};   Students talk to teachers very boldly which is very odd for me.

P_{14};   adapting university culture was difficult for me because of difference in my culture.

8. **How did your interactions with instructors differ between your college and the university?**

P_1;   At my college I can easily talk to my teachers whereas here I have to take time from my teachers before discussing with them.

P_2;   I fell hesitant to discuss even topic related things with my teachers because of language barrier and I also fell that teachers prefer to talk with those students who have good communication skills.

P_3;   Interactions with instructors at university were more formal and self-initiated compared to school, where teachers were more accessible and closely involved in students' progress. At university, I had to take the initiative to approach instructors during office hours or via email for guidance, as lectures often catered to larger groups. While university instructors were knowledgeable and supportive, the emphasis was on independent learning, requiring me to be proactive in seeking help. This shift taught me to communicate more professionally and manage my academic responsibilities autonomously.

P_4;   It is difficult because teachers only prefer those students who talk in the class they didn't pay attention to the students who are from backward area. So my interactions with teachers at my areas was very good but here I feel very much difficult to talk to teachers.

P_5;   At my college I easily contact with instructors but here teachers only focus on students which can speak effectively I the classroom and if we need to discuss

anything we have to take time from them first or we have to wait for them to come in office.

P6; Interaction with instructors was quite difficult for me because instructors were not available we have to visit there offices to discuss things where as in my rural area teachers were involved with us and they know everything about us.

P7; at university, interactions with instructors were more formal and less frequent, with a focus on independent learning. In contrast, my college had more personal, direct contact with teachers and a more guided approach.

P8; I fell reluctant to talk to instructors here because of my language barrier where as in my college I can discuss everything with my teachers related to topic easily.

P9; I think interaction with university instructors are more friendly then school live we can share every problem of life with university teachers.

P10; I feel hesitate to engage with my university instructors because of language barrier but in school and college I was very closed to my teachers.

P11; we have less personalized attention and more formal interactions with instructors at the university.

P12; the university instructors are friendly as compare to school teachers.

P13; I had not good interaction with instructors here because they talk with students very rudely.

P14; well I feel that because of gaps in my foundational knowledge it was difficult for me to interact with instructors easily.

P14; I fell hesitant to talk with instructors because of low confidence.

9. **Can you share any experiences where you felt isolated or misunderstood by your peers due to your rural background?**

P1; Coming from a rural background, I occasionally felt isolated or misunderstood by my peers, especially during discussions about urban lifestyles or cultural experiences I wasn't familiar with. For instance, conversations about trendy restaurants, city events, or public transport systems sometimes made me feel out of place. There were also moments when my simpler lifestyle or values were perceived as different, leading to unintentional stereotypes. However, over

time, sharing my experiences and embracing the diversity around me helped bridge these gaps and foster mutual understanding.

P_2;   Yes I faced a lot of difficulties because I cannot speak English very well like my peer groups I have no creativity like arts creativity calligraphy I couldn't use computer laptops very well I can't play sport very well These all difficulties I faced a lot .

P_3;   I sometimes felt isolated or misunderstood by my peers at university due to my rural background, especially when I struggled with certain technologies or academic discussions that seemed more familiar to students from urban areas.

P_4;   when doing group tasks. When using laptop for assignment I am not able to understand them because of language barrier and yes my communication skills are also not good to clear my point of view.

P_5;   I remember feeling out of place when my peers discussed popular city restaurants and events. I had never experienced those things, and they seemed to assume everyone had.

P_6;   Yes In our group projects I couldn't convey my points to then so in result I have to take the task of their choice.

P_7;   Yes during discussions and with they plan to go outside it was also challenging for me.

P_8;   during group projects I feel alone and uncomfortable.

P_9;   during group presentation.

P_{10};   during class discussions and group projects I'm unable to convey my point of view.

P_{11};   when discussing about any specific topic in the class with fellows I very hesitant to tell them about my idea because of my poor accent.

P_{12};   Planning anything related to project I have to agree with other point of view because of I am unable to clear my point of view with them.

P_{13};   during our group project I feel uncomfortable because all members cannot get my point and they were very rude with me.

P_{14};   during group presentations.

P$_{15}$;   when planning for an event I was unable to clear my point of view with my fellow effectively as a result I have to agree with their point.

10. **What coping strategies (Language improvement, Classroom participation, Peer interaction, Seeking support or any other) did you use to integrate yourself socially into university life?**

P$_1$;   To integrate socially into university life, I focused on improving my language skills through regular practice and engaging in conversations with peers. Actively participating in classroom discussions and group projects helped me build confidence and connect with classmates. I also joined student organizations and attended campus events to meet people with similar interests. Seeking support from mentors and utilizing university resources like workshops and counseling further eased the transition. By being open to new experiences and initiating interactions, I gradually built meaningful relationships and a sense of belonging.

P$_2$;   To integrate socially into university life, I focused on improving my language skills, actively participated in classroom discussions, joined clubs to meet peers, and sought support from academic advisors and peers when needed.

P$_3$;   I try to improve my language through mobile applications and also try to participate in class discussions and yes I seek support from my fellows were I found it difficult for me

P$_4$;   I used to stay with people of my language which are less at university, that's how I make interactions to others like with their friends.

P$_5$;   I joined study groups, attended campus events, and sought guidance from professors and advisors to integrate socially.

P$_6$;   I downloaded language apps to better my language and try to participate in classroom discussions.

P$_7$;   Yes I focus on my language skills by engaging with my peers and instructors during class.

P$_8$;   I try to participate in classroom discussions and yes seek help from peers when needed.

P$_9$;   Yes i am trying to improve my language through language apps.

P$_{10}$;   tried to participate in class discussions and also seek peers support to improve my language skills.

P$_{11}$;   with the help of peers I tried to improve my language.

P$_{13}$;   I try to use mobile apps to improve my language skills.

P$_{14}$;   I try to listen my peers and instructors actively with active listening I improved my language skills.

P$_{15}$;   I took help from my friends and tried to boost my confidence to grow socially.

11. **What communication challenges (language barriers, Classroom participation, and Peer interaction or any other) did you face when engaging with peers and instructors at university in urban settings?**

P$_1$;   One of the main communication challenges I faced at university in an urban setting was adjusting to the fast-paced and often informal language used by peers, which included slang or regional dialects that I wasn't familiar with. This sometimes made classroom participation and peer interactions difficult. Additionally, the larger class sizes made it harder to engage with instructors one-on-one, leading to challenges in getting personalized feedback. Navigating group discussions also required adapting to different communication styles, which was initially overwhelming but became easier with time and practice.

P$_2$;   I faced communication challenges such as language barriers, especially with academic jargon, difficulty participating in class discussions due to a lack of confidence, and sometimes struggling to connect with peers from different backgrounds.

P$_3$;   Language barriers, hesitation in classroom participation, and struggling to connect with peers from diverse backgrounds.

P$_4$;   Larger class size make it difficult for me to engage in the class and off course language barrier was there.

P$_5$;   Language barrier was there because of my poor ascent I fell reluctant to talk with instructors and fellows.

P$_6$;   I faced difficulty due to my poor communication skills and language barriers

P₇;   Understanding their point of view was very much difficult for me.

P₈;   during class discussion I faced a lot of difficulties I fell hesitant to convey my point of view.

P₉;   I faced difficulty in class participation.

P₁₀;   I faced difficulty when interacting with teachers

P₁₁;   I have poor English language skills because of this I faced a lot of difficulties in understanding lectures.

P₁₂;   when teacher ask us to discuss any topic with fellows it was very much difficult for me to discuss with them because of my poor accent.

P₁₃;   during class discussion.

P₁₄;   I am unable to clear my point of view.

P₁₅;   participating in group discussion was difficult for me because of my poor accent.

12. How comfortable were you in participating class discussions or group activities when you first started university?

P₁;   When I first started university, I felt somewhat uncomfortable participating in class discussions or group activities. The larger class sizes and more formal academic setting made me hesitant to speak up, especially with peers who seemed more confident or experienced. I was also adjusting to the different communication styles and expectations of university-level discourse. Over time, however, I became more comfortable by gradually engaging in smaller group activities and seeking opportunities to contribute, which helped build my confidence and ease in larger discussions.

P₂;   I was not very comfortable participating in class discussions or group activities when I first started university due to my inexperience and shyness in a new, larger setting.

P₃;   At the beginning I was uncomfortable but now I improved a lot to make myself comfortable by working on my communication skills and by engaging in different group activities.

P4; I was initially hesitant and uncomfortable participating in class discussions or group activities due to my rural background and fear of being judged or misunderstood.

P5; I was not comfortable that time because I thought that I am speaking English wrong but know I am trying to participate.

P6; I feel uncomfortable during my first discussion with teachers and peers because my confidence level is very low.

P7; I was not comfortable in the beginning but now I am trying my level best to do.

P8; I was not comfortable because I feel shy to talk in front of whole class.

P9; I was less confident so that's why I participate less in classroom.

P10; I was feeling very uncomfortable but now I'm trying to improve myself my participating in class discussions.

P11; I was not comfortable I was nervous at the beginning.

P12; I was not comfortable to participate in the class discussions because of my poor accent.

P13; I try to participate in class discussions but when I try to speak English my class fellows make fun of my accent due to which I feel uncomfortable and I try to not participate in class discussions.

P14; I want to participate in group and class discussions my fellows make me feel uncomfortable.

P15; I was very shy initially I feel hesitant to participate but with time I tried to listen others actively it helps me to improve my English and now I have little confidence to participate in discussions.

13. **Did you find it challenging to understand or express yourself during lectures or conversations? If so, how?**

P1; yes it was challenging for me.

P2; Yes, I initially found it challenging to understand and express myself during lectures and conversations, especially due to the fast pace of discussions and the academic vocabulary used. Sometimes, I struggled to keep up with the complex concepts or technical language, which made it difficult to participate confidently.

To overcome this, I started reviewing lecture materials in advance, taking detailed notes, and seeking clarification from instructors or peers when needed. Over time, this helped me improve both my comprehension and ability to express myself more clearly.

P_3;   Yes, I struggled to understand urban references, idioms, and slang, which made it difficult to follow lectures and conversations. I also found it hard to articulate my thoughts and opinions due to my limited vocabulary and fear of being judged.

P_4;   Yes, I found it challenging to understand and express myself during lectures, especially with complex academic language and unfamiliar terms. It was hard to keep up with the pace of discussions and explain my thoughts clearly.

P_5;   Yes it was challenging for me to express my self during lectures because of poor pronunciation But then I try to review notes before class so it helped me a lot.

P_6;   Yes I find because I'm not so confident.

P_7;   Yes because can't understand the teaching method of university teachers easily.

P_8;   I can understand and express myself during lecture or conversation.

P_9;   I don't understand lecture properly because it is in English and I have poor English language skills.

P_{10};   I feel difficulty in understanding lectures because of gaps in my foundational knowledge (English language).

P_{11};   I feel challenging to understand lectures because of my poor vocabulary.

P_{12};   I listen to lectures effectively to understand but when it comes to express my thoughts in the class it becomes challenging for me.

P_{13};   challenging for me to ask questions from teachers because of my poor English language accent.

P_{14};   understanding lectures of teachers was difficult for me because mostly they are in English language.

P_{15};   it was difficult for me to express myself in the class because teachers didn't pay attention to individual needs of the students here.

14. At university education have you developed communication skills and what difficulties you faced?

P_1;   Yes, at university, I developed my communication skills, particularly in expressing ideas more clearly and engaging in academic discussions. However, I faced difficulties initially, such as adapting to formal academic language and overcoming my hesitation in speaking up during lectures or group activities. Additionally, the diverse communication styles of peers sometimes made it challenging to connect. To address these issues, I focused on actively participating in discussions, seeking feedback, and practicing public speaking, which gradually boosted my confidence and helped refine my communication skills.

P_2;   Yes, at university, I developed better communication skills, especially through class discussions and group work. However, I faced difficulties with academic jargon, articulating my ideas confidently, and adjusting to the formal communication style required in university.

P_3;   yes i improve my communication skills and I face my difficulties during this condition like social interaction language problem etc.

P_4;   Yes by participating in discussion. I faced a lot of difficulties I felt hesitant to share my ideas even with fellows.

P_5;   Yes I'm trying to develop then with help of my friends and I'm also trying to participate in class discussions.

P_6;   I developed communication skills, but struggled with articulating complex ideas and public speaking nerves.

P_7;   Yes I'm trying to improve with the help of students and with the help of mobile applications.

P_8;   Yes I developed my communication skills with the help of my fellow because initially I fell hesitant to convey my ideas.

P_9;   I'm trying now to improve my language with friends.

P_{10};   I faced a lot of difficulty when doing presentations but I try to improve myself through practice.

P_{11};   I try to listen to lectures actively it helps me to improve my vocabulary.

P$_{12}$;   initially I faced a lot of difficulty in understanding lectures and while communicating with peers and instructors but now I'm trying to improve myself through reading lectures material before my class and through active listening.

P$_{13}$;   I improved my language skills through mobile applications.

P$_{14}$;   I feel hesitant while communicating with peers but I am improving my communication through YouTube videos and mobile applications.

P$_{15}$;   I improved my language through active listening.

15. **Can you describe any instances where you faced difficulties in group discussions?**

P$_1$;   in group discussions, I occasionally faced difficulties in articulating my ideas clearly, especially when peers were more vocal or confident. At times, I struggled to find the right words or felt hesitant to interrupt others, which made it hard to contribute effectively. Additionally, differing communication styles and the fast pace of some discussions left me feeling unsure about when to speak up. To overcome these challenges, I worked on preparing my points in advance, practicing active listening, and gradually becoming more comfortable asserting myself during group interactions.

P$_2$;   in group discussions, I often struggled to express my ideas clearly and keep up with the pace of conversation. Additionally, I found it challenging to contribute confidently in groups with more experienced or vocal peers.

P$_3$;   Yes when teachers assign us a group task I was always a wondering to find right words to express my ideas and it was very difficult for me to interrupt my fellows even if I have best ideas in my mind.

P$_4$;   One instance was during a group project when I hesitated to share my idea, and a dominant group member interrupted me, making me feel belittled and unheard.

P$_5$;   When teachers gave us group presentations I fell hesitant to discuss my ideas with fellows at the end I do the part which my fellows ask me.

P$_6$;   yes when doing group projects I was not able to clear my point to my fellows so because of that I can't discuss about my ideas with them.

P$_7$;   when teacher gave us group projects my urban fellows didn't value my ideas.

P$_8$;   every time group projects and discussions are dominated by urban fellows.

P$_9$;   I remember once our teacher gave us a group presentation. I conveyed my idea very difficultly with group members but in presentation my rural fellows with good communication skills presented my idea as her own I was not able to do anything then because by my poor language skills.

P$_{10}$;   we got 2 group assignments when we discuss things before assignment I feel very much hesitant to convey my idea because I don't know how to convey my idea properly.

P$_{11}$;   when doing group presentations I always try to find right words to present my topic properly but it was very difficult for me.

P$_{12}$;   In group discussions I try to keep quiet because of my poor vocabulary as a result that discussion was always dominated by the students with good speaking skills.

P$_{13}$;   when teacher give us some topic to discuss it in group I always stay quiet because I have not good words to speak.

P$_{14}$;   I always try to ask my teachers to assign me individual work because I am not confident to convey my idea in the group.

P$_{15}$;   in the beginning I was shy so my group members always dominate group discussions.

16. **What strategies (Language improvement, Classroom participation, Peer interaction, Seeking support or any other) did you use to overcome academic challenges during your transition to university life?**

P$_1$;   I always try to seek peer support it helped me a lot to improve academically.

P$_2$;   I try to read the provided material before class it helped me to improve academically.

P$_2$;   to overcome academic challenges during my transition to university life, I focused on improving my language skills by reading academic texts and practicing writing to enhance clarity and coherence. I actively participated in classroom discussions to build confidence and better understand course material. I also formed study groups with peers to exchange ideas and clarify difficult concepts. Seeking

support from tutors and academic advisors helped me stay on track with assignments and develop effective study strategies. Additionally, utilizing university resources like workshops and libraries helped me manage the academic workload more effectively.

P3;   To overcome academic challenges, I focused on improving my language skills, actively participated in class, sought support from professors and peers, and joined study groups to better understand the material and boost my confidence.

P4;   I try to participate in study groups.

P4;   I focused to improve my language skills by reading English books and tried to participate in class discussions and yes I took help from my fellows like we created study groups so that helped us a lot.

P5;   English language courses and online resources. Joining study groups, attending campus events. Meeting with professors, academic advisors etc.

P6;   I try to participate in class discussions and ask questions from teachers in the class to clear complex ideas.

P7;   Like talking with friends in WhatsApp groups and pushing myself to interact with teachers.

P7;   I try to interact with teachers so it helped me to clear points.

P8;   I tried to participate in class discussions and yes I seek for help from my peers.

P9;   I try to read the provided material from teachers before lecture.

P10;   I always note difficult words which in listen in the class and then when I came back to hostel I try to find the meanings of those words so with this technique I improved my vocabulary and helped me to understand things during lecture.

P11;   I seek support from some teachers and 3 students of class

P12;   I try to participate in class to make myself confident.

P13;   Class participation.

P14;   I try to seek support from my fellows it help me.

P15;   joined study groups to discuss topics which I didn't understood in the class.

17. How did you address social integration challenges when interacting with your peers and instructors?

P_1;   tried to interact with peers.

P_2;   I made efforts to engage in group activities.

P_3;   To address social integration challenges, I made a conscious effort to engage in small group discussions and attend social events organized by the university. I actively sought opportunities to interact with peers from diverse backgrounds, which helped me overcome initial feelings of isolation. With instructors, I started attending office hours and participating more in class to build rapport and establish a connection. I also focused on being open-minded and adaptable, learning to navigate different communication styles and cultural differences, which gradually helped me feel more integrated into both social and academic settings.

P_4;   to address social integration challenges, I made an effort to join student clubs, engage in group activities, and actively participate in discussions. I also sought help from instructors and peers when needed to build connections and improve my confidence.

P_5;   I tried to build confidence so that I can interact with every one easily. I tried to participate in class discussions and I tried to discuss things with my instructors to boost my confidence level.

P_6;   I addressed social integration challenges by actively listening to others, asking open-ended questions, and being approachable and respectful in my interactions with peers and instructors.

P_7;   social integration is more difficult for me during these time i can't talk with peers because I can't understand their language.

P_8;   peer support.

P_9;   It was challenging for me to make new friends but I try to discuss difficult points with peers and instructors.

P_{10};   I firstly try to engage in small groups I try to change my mindset according to the culture.

P_{11};   try to make new friends belonging from different areas.

P_{12};   I tried to interact with instructors.

P_{13};   I worked on language to integrate with people socially.

P$_{14}$;   I engaged in group activities it helps me to boost my confidence.

P$_{15}$;   I try to ask questions where I didn't understand others language.

18. **What role do family play in helping you cope with challenges related to university life?**

P$_1$;   Financial support.

P$_2$;   Family plays a crucial role in helping me cope with university challenges by providing emotional support, encouragement, and practical advice. Their understanding and reassurance help alleviate stress during tough times, while their guidance often offers perspective on academic or personal issues. Additionally, family can be a source of financial assistance and motivation, reminding me of my goals and the bigger picture when challenges feel overwhelming. Their constant presence, even from a distance, creates a sense of stability and comfort amidst the demands of university life.

P$_3$;   my family provided emotional support, encouragement, and advice, helping me cope with challenges at university by offering a sense of stability and reassurance during difficult times.

P$_4$;   Yes they support me financially and they give me motivation like u can do it so I tried my level best to overcome challenges.

P$_5$;   Financial support.

P$_6$;   Everything I need, By the Grace of Allah my family provides me.

P$_7$;   they support me financially even they faced a lot of difficulties.

P$_8$;   Family provides financial and emotional support, guidance, and encouragement.

P$_9$;   they support me financially.

P$_{10}$;   financial and emotional support.

P$_{11}$;   family supports me in every way I needed there help.

P$_{12}$;   they supports me financially and motivated me.

P$_{13}$;   family gives me every support I needed.

P$_{14}$;   my family supports me financially.

P$_{15}$;   yes they give me encouragement and motivation and off course financial support is also there.

19. What role do friends play in helping you cope with challenges related to university life?

P_1;   I didn't get any help from my friends here

P_2;   initially I have no friends here. But later on when I make friends there are some good friends who helped me cope up with challenges.

P_3;   Friends play a vital role in helping me cope with university challenges by offering emotional support, companionship, and shared experiences. They provide a safe space to vent, discuss problems, and seek advice, often understanding the struggles of university life firsthand. Friends also help alleviate stress through social activities and by creating a sense of belonging. Additionally, they can offer academic support, such as collaborating on assignments or sharing study resources, making the challenges feel more manageable.

P_4;   Friends played a crucial role by offering emotional support, sharing experiences, and providing advice, helping me feel more connected and less isolated during the challenges of university life.

P_5;   Making friends was challenging but some are good ones they provide me safe space to discuss problems they give me advice to overcome challenges.

P_6;   Friends helped me when doing assignments and making presentations because I didn't know anything about using laptop.

P_7;   Friends helped me to improve my language skills and to make my assignments and presentations.

P_8;   friends always motivate me provide full support during any kind of situations.

P_9;   Friends provide emotional support, academic help, and a sense of belonging.

P_{10};   by providing emotional support, time and sympathy they help.

P_{11};   they helped me in any difficulties. Like group projects.

P_{12};   Friends help me to make assignments and presentations.

P_{13};   they try to teach me how to use technology.

P_{14};   they share notes with me.

P$_{15}$;   friends support me emotionally whenever I feel alone they were there for me.

20. **Can you share any techniques that helped you improve your communication skills in the university setting?**

P$_1$;   to improve my communication skills in the university setting, I practiced active listening during lectures and group discussions, ensuring I fully understood others before responding. Participating in class presentations and group projects helped me build confidence in public speaking and teamwork. I also joined student organizations and attended workshops focused on effective communication. Seeking feedback from peers and professors and regularly reflecting on my interactions allowed me to identify areas for improvement. Engaging in diverse conversations with people from different backgrounds also enhanced my ability to communicate effectively in various settings.

P$_2$;   To improve my communication skills, I practiced active listening, participated more in class discussions, sought feedback from peers and instructors, and engaged in group activities to build confidence in expressing my ideas.

P$_3$;   I try to listen lectures actively and I write difficult words in the notebooks after lectures I tried to understand through Google that helped me a lot.

P$_4$;   Practicing presentations, active listening, and asking clarifying questions helped improve communication skills.

P$_5$;   i think only practice make perfect there is no other technique not work to improve communication skill. So I try to practice when I'm alone.

P$_6$;   through active listening.

P$_7$;   Yes I tried my level best to talk with the instructors in class.

P$_8$;   listening to the speakers is most important technique.

P$_9$;   Yes I used social media to improve my communication skill.

P$_{10}$;   Reading and listening more and more.

P$_{11}$;   effectively listening to lectures.

P$_{12}$;   Yes mobile applications.

P$_{13}$;   by seeking feedback from my friends.

P$_{14}$;   through YouTube.

P₁₅;   by seeking feedback from my instructors.

21. Are there any skills you wish you had learned before university that would have helped you cope better?

P$_1$;   before university, I wish I had learned better time management, effective study techniques, and financial literacy skills. Managing multiple deadlines and balancing academic, social, and personal responsibilities can be overwhelming without these skills. Additionally, understanding how to budget, save, and manage expenses in an independent setting would have made the transition smoother. Stronger self-discipline and stress management techniques would also have been beneficial in coping with the challenges of university life.

P$_2$;   wish I had learned time management skill.

P$_3$;   I wish I had learned better time management, advanced research skills, and more effective communication techniques before university, as these would have helped me cope with academic challenges more easily.

P$_4$;   I wish I had learned about the use of technology before coming to university.

P$_5$;   I wish I've learned better English language before and yes how to use computer to make assignments If I knew about these things before then I think I can cope up with other challenges easily.

P$_6$;   Yes I wish I've learned how to use computer for academic purpose before and language skills also.

P$_7$;   I wish I had better time management skills and management of budget and stress.

P$_8$;   Time management, self-motivation, and independent study skills.

P$_9$;   use of computer to make assignments and presentation.

P$_{10}$;   yes and they are how to use technology and writing in English

P$_{11}$;   Only English language

P$_{12}$;   ICT skills.

P$_{13}$;   communication skills.

P$_{14}$;   time management skill.

P$_{15;}$ about using computer then I can do my assignments and presentations on my own without seeking help from my fellows.

22. **What types of support services does your university offer that have helped you adjust to academic life in an urban setting?**

P$_{1;}$ I didn't receive any support from university staff.

P$_{2;}$ university staff is very rude with students they didn't help students.

P$_{2;}$ My university offers a range of support services that have been instrumental in adjusting to academic life in an urban setting. These include academic advising and tutoring for coursework, career services to navigate job opportunities, and workshops on time management and urban living skills. Additionally, the counseling center provides mental health support, while student organizations and networking events help build a sense of community. Orientation programs specifically tailored to urban challenges, such as public transportation guidance and safety tips, have also been particularly helpful.

P$_{3;}$ My university offers support services such as tutoring, language assistance, counseling, and academic advising, which have helped me adjust to the academic demands and navigate the urban university environment.

P$_{4;}$ Orientation programs were organized but that was not effectives something more effective should be done.

P$_{5;}$ I didn't find any support here they only did one orientation program according to me that was not enough.

P$_{6;}$ didn't find any support here.

P$_{7;}$ they offer scholarships but I didn't receive yet.

P$_{8;}$ they have hostels for students but didn't get seat in the hostel yet.

P$_{9;}$ staff is very rude here.

P$_{10;}$ Coordinators are very rude if we need some help they didn't listen to our problems.

P$_{11;}$ they help only those students who have strong reference.

P$_{12;}$ scholarship but didn't received yet.

P$_{13;}$ orientation program is there but I think it is not enough.

P$_{14;}$ staff is very rude didn't get any support.

P$_{15;}$ no support received as per needed.

23. How effective do you find the university's support systems (e.g., counseling, tutoring, orientation programs) in addressing your challenges?

P$_1$;   The effectiveness of a university's support systems, such as counseling, tutoring, and orientation programs, largely depends on their accessibility, quality, and responsiveness. When well-structured and widely promoted, these services can be invaluable in helping students navigate academic, personal, and social challenges. For instance, counseling services provide mental health support, tutoring helps with academic difficulties, and orientation programs ease the transition into university life. However, their impact may be limited if students are unaware of these resources or face long wait times, highlighting the need for better outreach and resource allocation.

P$_2$;   I find the university's support systems, like counseling, tutoring, and orientation programs, quite effective in addressing my challenges. They provided guidance, helped me improve my skills, and made me feel more confident in navigating university life.

P$_3$;   programs were not very much effective.

P$_4$;   I didn't get any support. Yes orientation program was organized but I think that was not very much effective.

P$_5$;   Orientation programs was not much effective counselling services should be provided to students.

P$_6$;   Not I didn't find any support orientation program was there and no other support system was available for us.

P$_7$;   There was only one orientation program but that was not very much effective.

P$_8$;   didn't get any support.

P$_9$;   no effective orientation program available for us.

P$_{10}$, P$_{11}$, P$_{12}$, P$_{13}$, P$_{14}$, P$_{15;}$ haven't receive any support.

24. How university administration and staff helped you at university?

P$_1$;   University administration and staff have helped by providing academic guidance, offering counseling services, and organizing workshops or orientation

programs. They have also supported with administrative processes, such as enrollment and financial aid, though the level of assistance can vary.

P_2;   University administration and staff helped me by providing clear guidance on academic policies, offering support through advising and counseling services, and addressing any issues I faced with course registration or campus resources, making my transition smoother.

P_3;   Administrations behavior was very rude and when it comes to department they also behave very rudely with us yes if teachers support then they help us.

P_4;   Oh administrative staffs behavior was very much rude with students. When I go to them for any issue I fell demotivated to study in the university.

P_5;   staff is very rude here.

P_6;   some people in the staff are cooperative but many of them are rude.

P_7;   Administration staff is very rude

P_8;   university staff and even coordinators in the department are very rude.

P_9;   they helped us to solve our problem but their behavior is very rude.

P_{10};   they only talk in good way with the students who have reference.

P_{11};   Behavior of staff is harsh.

$P_{12}, P_{13}, P_{14}, P_{15}$; didn't get any support from staff they are very much rude.

25. **How frequently do university staff or advisors check in with students to understand and address their unique needs?**

P_1;   the frequency of check-ins by university staff or advisors varies, but they are often limited to scheduled sessions or specific issues raised by students. Regular and proactive engagement to understand and address unique needs is sometimes lacking, leaving gaps in support.

P_2;   University staff and advisors typically check in with students during orientation, at the start of each semester, and when academic concerns arise. While some advisors are proactive, others may only check in when students reach out for support or assistance.

P_3;   University staff and advisors typically check in with students at various points throughout the academic year like orientation sessions, Regular meetings, Academic Check-in and Advising Hours.

P₄;   Yes they check our unique needs but they take time students with reference can get help immediately.

P₅;   the administration is so lazy, they teased us for small things.

P₆;   Staff helped us but not always they talk to students very rudely.

P₇;   most often they asked it and if needed support they gave.

P₈;   only when students initiate contact.

P₉;   they didn't answer our queries.

P₁₀;   have not good experience with administration.

P₁₁;   they only prefer those students who have connection with them otherwise they talk very rudely.

P₁₂;   their behavior is very rude. Whenever I went there for some help I feel demotivated to study in the university.

P₁₃;   they answer our queries but take so much time.

P₁₄;   administrative staff help students to solve their problems but their behavior with students is very rude.

P₁₅;   I have not good experience with them.

26. How has moving to an urban area affected your physical and emotional wellbeing? Please describe.

P₁;   Moving to an urban area has impacted my physical and emotional well-being by introducing more stress due to the fast-paced lifestyle, noise, and crowds. However, it has also provided more opportunities for exercise, socializing, and personal growth, which have positively influenced my overall well-being over time.

P₂;   Moving to an urban area has impacted my physical and emotional well-being by introducing challenges such as adjusting to a fast-paced lifestyle, dealing with pollution and limited green spaces, and coping with loneliness or homesickness. These changes can lead to stress and affect overall health.

P₃;   we living in very high distance from our hometown then we can't interact with our family in daily routine and we also having lot of other issues so these problems effect our emotions when our emotions are breaks then we cannot stable physically.

P4;   Moving to an urban area can be overwhelming, causing increased stress, anxiety, and decreased physical activity.

P5;   I fell very depressed I miss my family members here it affected my physical and emotional wellbeing.

P6;   homesickness cause stress.

P7;   it was very difficult for me to move here and left every home member behind. Emotionally I faced a lot of challenges.

P8;   I miss my siblings and parents so it effected my emotional wellbeing.

P9;   moving to urban area effected by emotional and physical wellbeing I felt ill when I came here because of environmental change and off course I miss my family members which affects me emotionally.

P10, P11, P12, P13, P14, P15; Homesickness.

27. **What are the main difficulties you face in managing your time between academics, personal life, and other responsibilities?**

P1;   The main difficulties in managing time often include balancing academic workload with personal life and other responsibilities, such as part-time jobs or family obligations. This can lead to stress, reduced focus, and difficulty maintaining a healthy work-life balance.

P2;   The main difficulties I face in managing time between academics, personal life, and other responsibilities are balancing study hours with social activities, handling multiple deadlines at once, and finding time for self-care amidst a busy schedule.

P3;   there is lot of responsibilities in university life like 2 time examinations quiz assignment and other our personal responsibilities we manage our every things like clothes washing, cooking, our room cleaning etc.

P4;   Due to bus schedule time management is difficult because of the bus timings sometimes my whole day spent in university.

P5;   Academic workload was challenging and due to home sickness was difficult for me to balance everything initially.

P6;   prioritizing tasks, avoiding procrastination, and allocating time for self-care are significant challenges.

P$_7$;   I don't think so there is any time related issues as a full time student time is enough to manage all roles.

P$_8$;   Ride issue because due to bus or ride I had to spend whole time in university.

P$_9$;   Timing of busses and I have no laptop that was difficult for me.

P$_{10}$;   Due to bus schedule time management is very difficult.

P$_{11}$;   managing buss timing with other activities is very much difficult for me.

P$_{12}$;   time table is very odd like I have to spent my full day in university from morning to evening so I didn't find time to do all other activities.

P$_{13}$;   buss timing is very odd due to which I have to spent whole day in university.

P$_{14}$;   in exams I faced difficulty in time management because I'm living in hostel and had to manage other things with studies and sometimes we have 2 papers in a day.

P$_{15}$;   in hostel I have to do all the things like cleaning my room, washing cloths etc. managing studies with all these things was bit difficult for me initially but know I've learned to manage everything with time.

28. What financial challenges have you faced after moving to an urban area for higher education?

P$_1$;   after moving to an urban area for higher education, financial challenges often include managing higher living costs, such as rent, food, and transportation, alongside tuition fees. Limited access to part-time jobs, unexpected expenses, and the need to support family back home can further strain finances.

P$_2$;   After moving to an urban area for higher education, I faced financial challenges such as high living costs, rent, transportation, and managing tuition fees. Balancing these expenses while trying to maintain a budget has been difficult.

P$_3$;   many financial challenges facing because we buy everything from shops which we take free from our own village.

P$_4$;   Fee structure was very high and photocopies are also expensive so I had to take extra money from family.

P$_5$;   Hostel fee is highly cost my father faced many difficulties to pay my hostel fee.

P$_6$;   High living costs, tuition fees, and limited part-time job opportunities.

P$_7$;   Hostel rents and food expenses were very difficult for me manage.

P$_8$;   I faced hotels food challenges and go outside with fellows it creates financial burden on me.

P$_9$;   Managing fees, accommodation.

P$_{10}$;   Hostels are very expensive.

P$_{11}$;   hostels are expensive so I face fee challenge here.

P$_{12}$;   photocopies of notes and assignments print is very expensive it creates burden one me.

P$_{13}$;   I had to take prints of assignments and take internet packages which creates burden on me.

P$_{14}$;   I has to take extra pocket money for prints and packages.

P$_{15}$;   hostels are expensive and yes fee structure is high my family pay my fee very difficultly.

29. What are some other personal challenges you face that are not covered above?

P$_1$;   Other personal challenges I face include adjusting to being away from home, dealing with homesickness, and managing the pressure to succeed academically while maintaining a social life. Additionally, navigating cultural differences and finding a sense of belonging in a diverse urban environment has been challenging.

P$_2$;   managing busy schedule of hostel with studies.

P$_3$;   Many others challenges like students didn't talk to us because we are from rural area and teachers many of the teachers didn't know about our names.

P$_4$;   Homesickness, adapting to new social and academic environments, and maintaining relationships.

P$_5$;   Transport, time table issues.

P$_6$, P$_7$, P$_8$, P$_9$, P$_{10}$, P$_{11}$, P$_{12}$, P$_{13}$, P$_{14}$, P$_{15}$; No