

## Socio-Cultural Impact of Afghan Refugees on Pakistan

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### Abstract:

*This article identify who are refugees in context of International law and it examines how UNHCR plays a vital role for defining who really are refugees. Likewise, this article analyze how influx of Afghan refugees came to Pakistan when Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in 1979. The Afghan refugees effected the socio-cultural and even the economic dynamics of Pakistan, this article highlights some of those factors. In addition, this study propose that international communities must recognise Pakistan's role for hosting Afghan refugees for decades despite its own nationals got victimised in socio-cultural and economic aspects. In the end it also narrates the future of Afghan refugees in Pakistan and duty of international communities and international organization in facilitating Pakistan and Afghan refugees in material and diplomatic methods in a real way as they deserved.*

**Key words:** Afghan, burden, Cultural, economic, impact, Pakistan weak economy, socio, future of refugees, UNHCR.

### Refugees

A refugee, is a displaced person who has been forced to cross national boundaries and who cannot return home safely. Such a person may be called an asylum seeker until granted refugee status by the contracting state or the UNHCR.

In accordance with the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, it states that refugee is an individual who attributable to a very much established dread of being oppressed for reasons of race, religion, nationality, enrollment of a specific social gathering, or political supposition, is outside the nation of his nationality, and can't or, inferable from such dread, is unwilling to benefit himself of the insurance of that nation.

### How are refugees protected?

Governments ordinarily ensure the essential human rights and physical security of nationals. Yet, when regular civilians get to be exiles or become refugees this security net vanishes. UNHCR's fundamental part in seeking after universal security is to guarantee that states know about, and follow up on, their commitments to ensure outcasts and people looking for refuge. Be that as it may, it is not a supranational association and can't be considered as a substitute for government duty. (UNHCR, February 1, 2002)

Nations may not persuasively return exiles to a region where they confront peril or separate between gatherings of evacuees. They ought to guarantee that outcasts advantage from monetary and social rights, at any rate to an indistinguishable degree from other remote occupants of the nation of shelter. For compassionate reasons, states ought to permit a life partner or ward youngsters to join people to whom brief shelter or refuge has been conceded. At last, states have a commitment to collaborate with UNHCR. (UNHCR, February 1, 2002).

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## Socio-Cultural impact of Afghan refugees on Pakistan

“The refugee crisis is as old as human civilization. Refugees have never been welcomed by their host countries. For instance, when the hapless Muslims of the subcontinent sold their valuable properties and embarked on an en-mass exodus to Afghanistan, Unfortunately, they were blatantly refused refuge. The unexpected embarrassment at the hands of their Muslim brethren”s and ruthless weather killed many of them on their way back to subcontinent.” (Baloch)



Source: UNHCR. (N.D). Emergencies. Retrieved December 28,2016, from, <https://www.unhcr.or.th/en/what/emergencies>.

Pakistan, measured as a poor nation has been facilitating Afghan displaced people since the Soviet intrusion in the 1980's. As per the report of Amnesty International,10 nations have half of the world's displaced people in which Pakistan remains on No 3, facilitating 1.6 million Afghan exiles. A large portion of the afghans evacuees are living in displaced person's grounds, outcast's towns and urban zones of Pakistan. (Khan, November 21, 2016)

Pakistan is not signatory of the displaced person or refugee”s convention 1951 nor signatory of the 1967 Protocol yet is absent to instituted any national enactment for the insurance of outcasts. Pakistan did not build up the techniques to decide the exile status of individuals who are looking for universal assurance inside its region in spite of the fact that, history demonstrates that Pakistan invited afghan outcasts in the nation and still has around 1.45 million displaced people. (Khan, November 21, 2016)

Nevertheless, in 1993 Pakistan signed a mutual agreement -Cooperation Agreement, with UNHCR. According to the agreement, Pakistan is agreed to grant refugee”s position to the asylum-seekers to remain in Pakistan till the solution of problem. (Khan, November 21, 2016)

Afghan Refugees affected the ethic balance in Pakistan, most common complaint about them generally is that they have added security problems in the country which became biggest cultural hazard to the peaceful cultural identity of Pakistan. They have increased some social problems such as drugs addiction, theft, robbery, kidnaping etc. Similarly, Afghan refugees compete with the local citizens for scarce such as land, water, housing, food and medical services and it becomes a curse for economically poor country like Pakistan.



**UNHCR. (JUNE 20, 2016). More than 15 lac Afghan refugees in Pakistan since 1980. Retrieved**

**December 23, 2016, from, <http://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/blog/2016/06/20/more-than-15-lac-afghan-refugees-in-pakistan-since-1980-unhcr/>.**

“Pakistan is a country with an ailing economy. The increasing budget deficit, simmering inflation and growing informal economy have retarded its economic growth. The rising unemployment has widened the gulf between haves and have nots. In short, the economic indicators are unsatisfactory and discouraging. Being mired in the quagmire of economic instability and degeneration, by no yardsticks Pakistan can afford to support a population of 1.7 million internationally displaced refugees. Besides, Pakistani youth, that is almost 60 percent of the national population, face tough competition in job-market. Since the refugees happily agree to work with little pays, they give the indigenous people a hard time while they hunt for job. Furthermore, the hike in price of daily commodities is another reason that make refugees aversive and undesirable for the local population. The greater the demand, as an economic theory suggests, the higher the price.” (Baloch)

### **Future of Afghan refugees in Pakistan**

International law provides that when the circumstance making individuals take shelter closes, they ought to return. Be that as it may, who chooses the circumstance has finished remains a discussed point. Without any reasonable power to choose this issue, the individual of the displaced person remains the last power to settle on the choice. Pakistan unfortunately despite serving a host to Afghan refugees hardly gets any recognition from external powers. The people of Pakistan despite facing Afghans as economic burden on their infrastructure tried to secure Afghan refugees within boundaries of Pakistan hardly got any reward from international communities, though Afghan refugees became a serious threat to Pakistan’s culture in verity of means yet Pakistan never complained. However, after 9/11 event Afghan refugees got involved in terrorist acts in Pakistan which became serious issue to economic, political and cultural arena of Pakistan. General view appears in public of Pakistan that “since peace has been restored in Afghanistan with the backing of international powers, there is no logical reason, at least a sane mind can’t find, in hosting such a large number of refugees.”

“Pakistan’s policy towards Afghan refugees has been determined by its political/foreign policy and relationship with Afghanistan as well as relations with the international community through UNHCR. Formal legal documents do not refer to Afghan refugees as „Refugees“, but „Afghan Nationals“. They are issued

Proof of Residence (POR) Cards not Refugee Cards. Pakistan considers the principle of non-refoulement does not apply as Afghan presence in Pakistan is renewed on a yearly basis (now on six-month basis) as a result of an agreement with UNHCR.” (Ijaz, July 10, 2016)

Refugees are not a permanent phenomenon; they are relied upon to repatriate once conditions come back to regularity in their nation of origin. Displaced people return when conditions allow, for the most part when a contention has finished, a level of dependability has been re-established, and fundamental framework has been revamped. Nonetheless, when the issue gets to be distinctly drawn out, a total return is not generally conceivable, on the grounds that it is the slipperiness of sturdy arrangements that prompts to an extended outcast circumstance in any case. “While repatriation is considered to be the most durable solution to refugees problems, and is being tried in the case of Afghans, comprehensive repatriation from Pakistan has not occurred. The changing nature of the Afghan conflict is gradually putting pressure on Pakistani policy-makers to look for alternative solutions.”

“It is possible to predict the future scenario for Afghan refugees in Pakistan. In the coming years, the push factors for them are likely to increase.”

“Pakistan has to adopt a policy of deliberate non-interference and adhere to it with consistency for building the climate of trust. The present Afghan society can neither be taken nor treated as one-dimensional society. The presence of secularists, pro-Americans, pro-Russians, pro-Pakistanis, pro-Indians, Taliban, political, nonpolitical, urban, rural, tribal and warring factions and groups is a ground reality. Taliban are as much an Afghan phenomenon as those who are fighting them. They are not at all a Pakistani offshoot. The formulation of Pakistan’s new Afghan policy should take into confidence all the Afghans. Even-handedness, equanimity, inclusion, trust and cooperation are some of the answers to the problem, but for that Pakistan will always need the support of Afghan government and it has to quit its pro Indian approach on the basis of which with out any solid reason it on time and again criticise Pakistan.”

## Conclusion

Facilitating colossal number of Afghan Refugees which has been more than 3 million for a long stretch of around four decades mirrors Pakistan's goodwill signal towards a loving nation Afghanistan. Pakistan has so far spent around, over US dollars 100 billion on arrangement of offices to the Afghan Refugees that include wellbeing, education, health, security and nourishment. Consequently, Pakistan has delivered a great many specialists, designers, legal advisors and talented laborers from among Afghan Refugees. In spite of restricted assets, Pakistan as a Muslim selfless nation of Afghanistan has assumed an indispensable part in pleasing the Afghan outcasts all through their grieved time for around 37 years. Pakistan permitted them to blend with neighborhood populace. The Afghan Refugees are transcendently ethnic Pashtuns and combined well with Pakistan's Pashtun well. Pakistanis have given space to Afghan refugees in neighborhoods. They were likewise furnished with security, sustenance, wellbeing, education, business openings, and access to different pleasantries of life.

As of now, Pakistan is not in a circumstance to additionally extend the time period to Afghan displaced people because of ascend in proportion in unemployment, over-stacked wellbeing and education and health related segment. The nation has requested from the worldwide group for tranquil repatriation of the displaced people as in significant parts of Afghanistan peace has been re-established. Without a doubt, the Afghan displaced people's nearness in Pakistan has changed the nation's political, financial, social, and security circumstance all things considered. In any case, Pakistan's present pushed, went for sending back Afghan displaced people, is absolutely determined by the nation's late counterterrorism endeavors; rather, in addition to other things.

Pakistan finally appears determined to ensure the repatriation of the Afghan refugees to their homeland. However, it won’t be an easy task, considering the long-drawn-out stay of the Afghans in the country. The UNHCR has already doubled its repatriation grant for Afghan refugees from \$200 to \$400 per person in a bid

to encourage them to return to Afghanistan. The need for enhancing the repatriation grant was felt necessary as the number of Afghan refugees voluntarily returning home from Pakistan fell sharply in 2016 to a mere 6,000 from 58,211 last year. The worsening security situation in Afghanistan due to the rise in attacks by the Afghan Taliban and Daesh, is the main reason for the Afghan refugees' decision not to return to Afghanistan this year, though a major factor is their gradual integration into the Pakistani economy and society. Pakistan has been proposing to Afghanistan and the UN to establish camps inside Afghanistan for the repatriation of Afghan refugees and has also offered assistance, including free supply of wheat for three years, to accomplish this task. However there has been no follow-up on this proposal. Incidentally, international assistance for the Afghan refugees in Pakistan effectively ended in 1995, and presently the UNHCR is providing some help to run the schools and clinics set up in the refugee camps.

In principle they have made up their minds to send back the Afghans and, henceforth, disallow entry of any Afghan to Pakistan without a visa. It remains to be seen how long it would take to make this happen, however the positive attitude of Afghan government towards Pakistan, the recognition of international community to the Pakistani nation for hosting Afghan refugees for 37 years and non involvement of Afghan national and refugees in terrorist activities in Pakistan will surely make Pakistan flexible towards refugees stay in the country.

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