

# SOCIAL INTEGRATION OF AFGHAN REFUGEES IN PAKISTAN: CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

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## Abstract

The present study followed a social constructivist approach as a philosophical world view to explore challenges to and opportunities of social integration of Afghan refugees in Pakistan. After summarizing the current status, recent perceptual changes in hosting communities, and the state, the concept of social integration is presented concisely. A few research questions were constructed to explore their satisfactory answers. Why has the perception of Afghan refugees (ARs) changed over the last two decades? Why has the open-door policy been converted to close door policy by the hosting communities and the State? How can social integration be strengthened? What Opportunities do ARs have for social integration? Documentary evidence has been gathered to provide satisfactory answers to the first two research questions, while for the remaining research questions, influential members from both (Refugee & Hosting) communities participated. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews and open discussions in stakeholders' meetings. The result showed that ARs are perceived as security threats and economic burden on the state; ARs are also considered as people difficult to live with; AR are illiterate and ill-tempered people. It was recommended that the repatriation process be expedited because Pakistan's economy is not strong enough to support millions of AR. It was also recommended that opportunities for social integration, such as celebrating common religious events, educational services, health services, and livelihood opportunities, be increased to strengthen during AR's stay in Pakistan, with financial support from the international community.

**Key words:** Social integration, Afghan Refugees, Pakistan, Challenges, Opportunities

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## 1. INTRODUCTION:

There are millions of refugees across the globe. Till the end of year 2015, there were some 65 million individuals who were forcible displaced due to persecution, conflict, violence and violations of basic human rights across the globe (UNHCR, 2016a). It is estimated that some 40.8 million individuals were internally displaced, 21.3 million individuals were refugees while 3.2 million people were the asylum seekers who had crossed international borders (ibid). High level of displacement is seen in Africa, The Middle East and South Asia and among these more than 50% world refugees came from 03 countries: Syria, Afghanistan and Somalia. Afghan refugees are the second largest after Syrian refugees Multilateral Development Banks, 2015). It is also a fact that 86% of world refugees are hosted by developing countries (UNHCR, 2016a). UNHCR counted 32 protracted refugees situations where total period of displacement reached to 26 years. Local integration and resettlement is great barriers towards voluntary repatriation and it is global policy that in conflict-affected countries where reintegration of refugees is not possible, hosting countries must extend support for better social integration between host and refugees societies. This situation is true here in Pakistan, where Afghan Refugees (AR) are living for the last 41 years. After invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, AR entered in Pakistan and Iran. Now the third generation of refugees is living in these countries. During the invasion of the Soviet Union in Afghanistan in 1979, AR entered in thousands, and due to the porous border of 2200 kilometers, Afghans used to enter Pakistan for their trades as usual. People living on both sides of the common border between Pakistan and Afghanistan share almost the same culture and hence they had a family relationship before 1979. This situation was very much attractive for AR and local people from the Pakistan side welcomed them and they provided them not only shelter, but also involved AR in almost every aspect of life. When the quantity reached in millions, the Government of Pakistan established Refugee Villages for them. Most of Afghan Refugee Villages were established in the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, long sharing border area and in the province of Baluchistan. AR reached up to 4 million who were residing in Pakistan. Up to 1995, AR were not perceived as burden for local community but when international support for AR lessened, it was not possible for Government of Pakistan to support all of AR independently and AR were allowed to move outside of their settlements for their livelihood. When AR moved in other cities of the country, they

did not find any support from people of other communities as they were enjoying from Pashtoon community in their previous settlements. The AR reported to be involved in robbery, smuggling of narcotics, weapons, drugs, and local theft. The situation become worsen and on the other side, Taliban took charge of Afghanistan and tribal war started again in Afghanistan. After 2000, US lead war started against Taliban regime in Afghanistan, thousands of AR entered again and due to Pakistani support for US against Taliban, Pakistan faced serious security issues and thousands of civilian were killed in terrorist attacks. It was also reported in many occasions that AR were supporting Terrorists, they offered them shelter, and after finding suitable time, they attacked on security agencies or civilians. Involvement of AR in Terrorists' activities in Pakistan caused a drastic change in perception about them in Pakistan. Before this situation, AR and local communities were in strong social bond, hundreds of AR married with local females and its reciprocal is also true. Thousands of AR had brought properties illegally and shopping malls etc. They had very good business of carpet, Honey, fabrics etc. The present study was designed to explore why Pakistan and hosting communities within Pakistan wanted to send the refugees back in Afghanistan as early as possible? Why the open door policy of Pakistan changed into a close door policy? Why perception about AR has been changed by Pakistan as a state and its general public? What opportunities do we have in Pakistan through which social integration may be strengthened again between host and refugee communities? This study followed a constructivist paradigm as philosophical world view through qualitative approach to seek satisfactory answers of the research questions. At the first stage current status of AR was find out through literature, than reasons through literatures were discussed which underpinned change in perception about AR from brotherhood to serious threat of security, social and economic burden, reasons of smuggling etc. After it, concept of social integration was presented and different domains of integration given by Ager and Strang were followed to collect data and to seek satisfactory answers of research questions.

### **1.1 Situation Analysis of Afghan Refugees in Pakistan**

Pakistan is hosting 1.4 millions of Afghan Refugees (ARs) currently. These ARs have been 4 million living here since 1980s. According to the fact sheet (2020), last year 6220 registered ARs returned to Afghanistan; 22,093 new babies of ARs were registered, 31,231 ARs got legal assistance, 146 schools were supported by United Nation Human Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) with 56,000 refugee students, 5288 ARs patients treated in health units supported by UNHCR and, 2145 ARs and Pakistani nationals received assistance in livelihood. UNHCR is working with other partners including government of Pakistan (GoP); Ministry of States and Frontier Regions (SAFRON), Chief Commissionerate for ARs; Commissionerate offices at federal and provincial levels; national and international non-governmental organizations; world Bank, Sister United agencies; and private sector for protection and humanitarian assistance to ARs in Pakistan. A multiyear Solution Strategy for Afghan Refugees (SSAR), 2018-2019 has a complete framework of actions for all partners to address needs of ARs and host communities through sustainable solutions of empowering youth through education, vocational skills and skills of livelihood. All stakeholders and partners are agree to extend this program to 2021 in Pakistan. SSAR launched a support platform in December, 2019 aiming at seeking international support for burden sharing, safely repatriation and reintegration of ARs in Afghanistan by easing burden on host communities. The purpose was to enable visibility of Afghan situation through good practices, identifying needs and working toward enhancing international burden and responsibility sharing. UNHCR supporting Afghani who voluntarily repatriate and pay \$200 on reaching any of three centers operating in Afghanistan. It also provides legal assistance to ARs through nine Advice and Legal Aid Centers (ALACs) in Pakistan. It also arranges training workshop to aware ARs how they can get any legal assistance, makes them aware how to take active part against gender based violence (AGBV). Home based girls school (HBGS) for girls who missed the chance of getting education has been established. Public facilities near refugee villages are also ensured for the sake of provision of accessibility of ARs children in public schools and toward increasing social cohesion between ARs and hosting communities. Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative (DAFI) Scholarships are also provided to 419 ARs students in the year 2019. In collaboration with other organizations and government of Pakistan, UNHCR supporting maternal and child health services to ARs. In the field of livelihood, UNHCR supporting women of both AR and host communities in learning carpet weaving skills in Baluchistan through Refugee Affected and Hosting Areas (RAHA) Programme. Government of Pakistan has implemented RAHA programmes in support of SSAR strategy by carrying out projects focusing on education, health, infrastructure, water and sanitation, social protection and livelihood. In 2019, UNHCR has celebrated 10 years' achievements of RAHA which supported 4,250 projects align with UNHCR mandate. Generally public does not accepting ARs to live here anymore and it demands their fast and early repatriation because the perception about ARs has been changed due to many factors. Little detail about evolution of perception of host communities about ARs is discussed here.

### **1.2. Changes in the Perceptions about ARs in Pakistan**

The year 2019 was the fortieth years since the beginning of the displacement of ARs and there were lot of changes in the way ARs were treated by the government of Pakistan and by the host communities. Here the discussion is about how perceptions and attitudes of the host communities and government of Pakistan has been evolved over time and what were the factors underpinning these drastic changes in the minds of the people.

Initially the ARs were welcomed in Pakistan with open heart as being neighbors and Muslims during hard time on them because of soviet invasion in Afghanistan in the late 1970s. Policies and attitude of Pakistani government as well

as the hosting communities was friendly and benevolent till the late 1980s but after it the policies became more restrictive during the 1990s. Pakistan was supported with massive military aid by United States for provision of military training to the people of Afghanistan to fight against Soviet Union but soon after it the ARs were left behind unsupported by the international community (Daily Times, 2016). Transitional change of open heart policy to more restrictive policy about ARs in Pakistan was due to many factors. The ARs which were regarded as brave Mujahideen during Afghanistan-Soviet war started some illegal activities in Pakistan and become source of great concern for the country. Change of perceptions about ARs was due to the Shigri Report which was prepared on ARs for more than two decades and there was a dire need to adopt a clear cut policy. International support provided by UNHCR and World Food Program was in halt in 1995 along with support from other international agencies and in absence of any support Pakistan was unable to support large number of ARs. This report classified ARs as illegal immigrants in 1996 (Shigri, 1998; Inspector General Police, 1998), and it was accepted policy for dealing with illegal immigrants in Pakistan. ARs were considered illegal due to: termination of Soviet invasion; withdrawal of USSR forces from Afghanistan; restoration of independent Afghan government; prolonged stay and above all the movement of ARs from their designated camps into other parts of the country. It was also brought into light many other factors like: thousands of ARs had bought properties and were engaged in commercial activities in Pakistan; it was reportedly occurred where ARs were found involved in crimes of drug trafficking, smuggling of prohibited arms, thefts and looting; their involvements in terrorist activities of bomb-explosions; they obtained illegal documents showing Pakistani identity and become serious concern about their differing social values and other traits like ferocious temperament or tribal character. This report also highlighted that in many instances ARs were blackmailed, threatened, ill-treated, and pressurized due to fear of detection by the law enforcement and civil agencies in Pakistan. These were the main reason due to which Pakistan was bound to adopt close camp and restrictive policy for ARs. National Alien Registration Authority was established to prepare documentation for ARs for a period and to kept ARs within their designated camps and those who will be follow will be forcibly returned back to Afghanistan (National Alien Registration System, 2014). This registration agency was eventually merged with National Database Registration Authority of Pakistan in 2014 (Ministry of Interior, 2014). The evolution of perceptions about ARs in Pakistan took a very longer time but now as a whole the nation wants to send the ARs back to their country as soon as possible. The other reasons underpin these perceptions are explained further.

### **1.2.1. ARs as Security Threat for Pakistan**

Involvement of ARs in criminal activities in Pakistan has changed the public as well state opinion about them. It was reported that ARs were involved in theft, kidnapping, extortion, murder and terrorist activities in Pakistan. Due to these activities ARs have been referred to as security threat and they have been told to vacate the cities (Shaheen, 2010). In recent past, terrorists' activities- such as Army Public School attack in Peshawar where more than 150 children were brutally burnt, fired and slaughtered acted as catalyst to turn the tide of public opinion about ARs in Pakistan. This terrorists attack was planned in Afghanistan (Yusufzai, 2015), this incident shrank asylum space for ARs in Pakistan (Zaidi, 2015). There was also a tension between US administration and Pakistan administration and it came to head when US took unilateral action through drone attack on Kurram Agency located near Afghan Boarder that allegedly killed militants in a house which was used by an Afghan Refugee (Masood, 2018). Such incidents where ARs were suspected to be involved (Afghan Terrorists to blend in among ARs) and presence of millions of ARs strengthened the perceptions about ARs as a great security threat for Pakistan (Hussain, 2018). This particular notion about ARs was also supported by Chief of Army Staff, General Qamar Javed Bajwa who stated that for maintaining security in the country ARs must be sent back (The Nation, February 18, 2018), this point was also supported by chief of Pakistan Military Intelligence and defense analyst that there are many evidences of terrorists hiding them among ARs and ARs were facilitators in most of the recent terror attacks. It was stated that Afghan Terrorist crossed into Pakistan (porous border of 2200km) and they stayed in ARs camps and it became humanly almost impossible to carry out any surveillance (Nafees, 2018). Former Interior Minister Chaudhry Nisar Khan once said that ARs facilitated many terrorists' attacks in the country (Mukhtar, 2017). Similarly chief justice of Peshawar High Court and former Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa remarked that significant percentage of ARs were causing problems and they were being used by the country's enemies including attacks, terrorists funding through unofficial hundi and hawala method (Khan, 2015). According to Inspector General of Islamabad Police and Senior Superintendent of Police of Islamabad Territory, ARs living in slum areas of the capital city involved in many heinous crimes of murders, robbery and extortion etc., and without sending them back no one can make federal capital a crime free city (Niaz, 2015). ARs were also the source of spreading Kalashnikove culture in the country through smuggling of different arms in Pakistan (Daily Times, 2014; The Nation, December 5, 2015).

### **1.2.2. ARs as Economic Burden for Pakistan**

A former Minister of States and Frontier Regions stated that ARs were a source of economic burden and caused the country a loss of \$200 billion in the last 03 decades (The Express Tribune, October 23, 2013). Pakistan government spokesmen and officials also claimed at many occasions that country's economy has carried the burden of hosting ARs for decades and ...cannot sustain it further (Lazarus, 2018).

### **1.2.3. ARs as Difficult to Live with**

No doubt in the fact that both Pakistanis and ARs have cultural, religious and ethnic proximity, influx of millions of ARs in Pakistan within a very short period of time has been portrayed as a cause of frustration and hostility among Pakistanis towards ARs (Amin, 2011). ARs are still characterized as by their Pashtun heritage as violent, rowdy and difficult to live with as their description (Naseer, 2017). There are evidence that most of Afghans are at the highest level of ignorance e.g., few recent events are shared for more clarification: two families had a dispute of utility bill of electricity which resulted in 09 murders including 05 brothers in ARs camps in Haripur, Pakistan in the month of August, 2020. Similarly another news came from Afghanistan where a donkey enter into the mosque and few people who were already offering prayer in mosque complaint the owner of the donkey. A fight begun and a person from the hosting mosque opened fire and killed the donkey. The owner of the donkey was from another tribe and he invited his tribe and then war began as a result 54 people killed including 33 female and kids in the month of September, 2020. These events reflects the brutality, violent attitude, rowdy truly supporting the slogan of difficult people to live with perception of general public about ARs in Pakistan.

#### **1.2.4. ARs as Smugglers of Drugs**

According to UNODC (2017), Afghanistan is the largest opium and poppy producing country across the globe and these drugs were exported to rest of the world through Pakistan (Mansoor, 2016), in Pakistan ARs had introduced these drugs (Aziz, 2016), it is also reported that many people living with substance use disorder were living in ARs camps and most of them were found to be women sometime these women sold their rations to procure drugs, in many cases these women sent their children at work in early ages due to which these children exposed to exploitation and abuse (UNHCR, 2000). These medicines were reported to be in common use of ARs as female ARs especially fed their children to calm them down and put the children to sleep so they can make the ends meet by focusing on their work (Khan, 2016). Poppy and opium were being used as medicines for years by ARs due to unavailability of traditional medicine and to deal with stress because of loss of family or displacement (IRIN, 2003). Culture of sectarian violence, drugs and weapons was perceived to be due to the ARs in Pakistan (Daily Times, December 7, 2017).

#### **1.2.5. ARs as Illegal Identity of Pakistan**

When ARs entered in Pakistan in 1979 and till 2000, there was mutual system of registration. During 1979-2000, it was reported that in absence of an efficient recordkeeping mechanism, ARs got identity cards illegally through bribery. Many ARs out of those even succeeded in getting computerized cards after 2001 (Dawn News, January 4, 2015; Khan, 2015). An investigation started resulting in the cancellation of near about 0.1 million illegal cards issued to ARs in Pakistan (Dawn News, October 13, 2010; Ghumman, 2012).

#### **1.2.6. Dwindling International Support/Funding**

Annual report of UNHCR, 2017 showed that 01 person on average displaced in every two seconds (Business Recorder, June 22, 2018), international community had diverted its attention to manage a response system for crises in Iraq, Bangladesh and Syria and ARs were not on priority (Reliefweb, March 2015). This report also highlighted that low income countries hosted 85% of world refugee population (Business Recorder, June 22, 2018), with Pakistan having been host to ARs for the last 40 years as second largest refugee hosting country in the world. This prolonged nature of displacement experienced a fluctuations in international funding for ARs in Pakistan (BBC News, September 2000). Burden of refugees on developing countries had been realized by the international community as the UN General Assembly affirmed the Global Refugee Compact in 2018 that acknowledged equitable responsibility sharing among all stakeholders in assisting host communities who supported refugees and enabling refugees to lead better lives (UNHCR, 2018). Global Refugee Compact is very positive step for Pakistan with the objectives of easing hosting communities from pressure, enhancing self-reliance of refugees, solution of third country options and safety return of refugees to their native countries with dignity (UNHCR, 2018).

#### **1.2.7. Campaigns against ARs on Social Media**

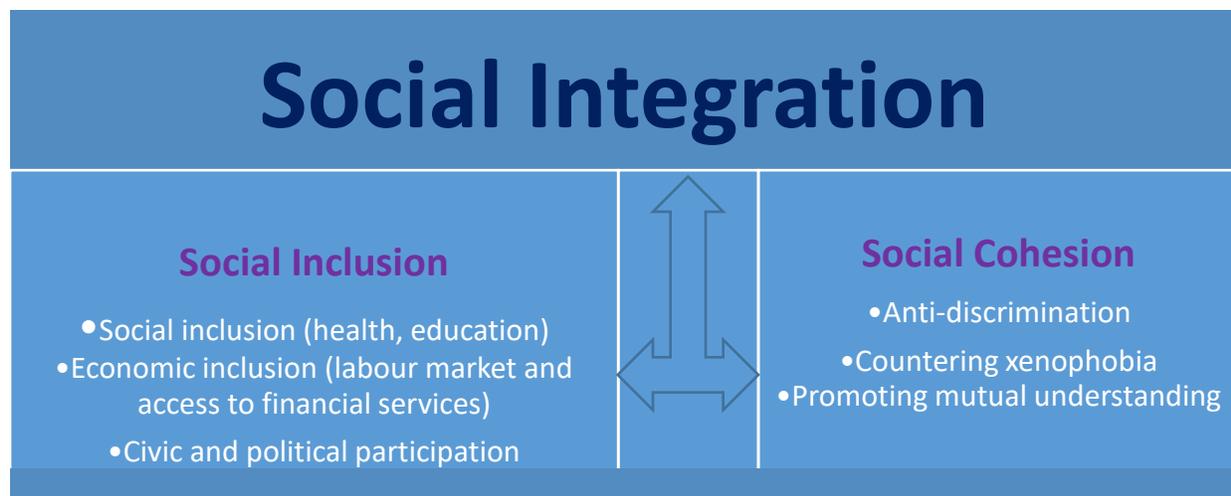
After brutal incidence of Army Public School in 2014, all ARs were forced under the national spotlight and they were placed under strict scrutiny (Dawn News, February 08, 2015). Hate against ARs was at its peak and different campaigns had been started against them including on social media. ARs were subjected to negative attention on social media with derogatory hashtags #Kick Out Afghan and #Afghan Refugees Threat (BBC News, August 28, 2016). These campaigns had a significant impact on changing public opinion about ARs in Pakistan and ARs represented “a menace” to the country and it affected the treatment they were afforded by the state and the host communities.

### **1.3. Social Integration**

According to UNRISD (1994) social integration is not a simple idea but a complex one where different people attached different meaning to it. Some people consider it a positive goal in which all human being have equal opportunities and rights. Here better integration improves lives of common people while some others think that it may result in an imposition of unwanted conformity. There are also people to whom social integration does not necessarily insure desirable or undesirable state. In simple words, integration simple describes patterns of human relations in a society and may provide prosperous context for human beings. The world Summit for Social Development (WSSD) held in Copenhagen in 1995 declared development of society for all is the main objective of social development and through social integration with building values, developing relations and institution this objective can be achieved. Society for all means an equitable society based on system of justice with equal opportunities for all, rights and responsibilities,

active participation in social, political and economic development of society. WSSD provided a broad and cross-sectoral platform for making policies to promote social integration. Prior to WSSD, social policy was only concerned with provision of social protection and basic services in the society (Moser, 1992). WSSD also gave key principles for promotion of social integration which were redistribution of socio-economic resources, recognition of social and cultural identities and representation of political voice (Fraser, 2005). Robinson (1998) considered integration as a chaotic concept which is used in common but understood differently by the most. To him this concept is contested, contextual and individualized. According to Ager and Strang (2008), integration is now considered as a key policy objective regarding resettlement of refugees and it is also become a burning issue of public discussion despite of its usage in different meanings.

According to International Organization for Migration (IOM), integration is a mutual adaptation between host and migrants' communities where migrants are supposed to incorporate social, cultural, economic and political life of hosting community. Strong integration where joint responsibilities are in practice further incorporates social cohesion and social inclusion. It is a multi-sectoral and cross-cutting issue which relates policies about social, economic, legal, civic and cultural aspects of migrants' lives and host communities (2017, p. 02). Below figure presents better interconnected aspects of social integration.



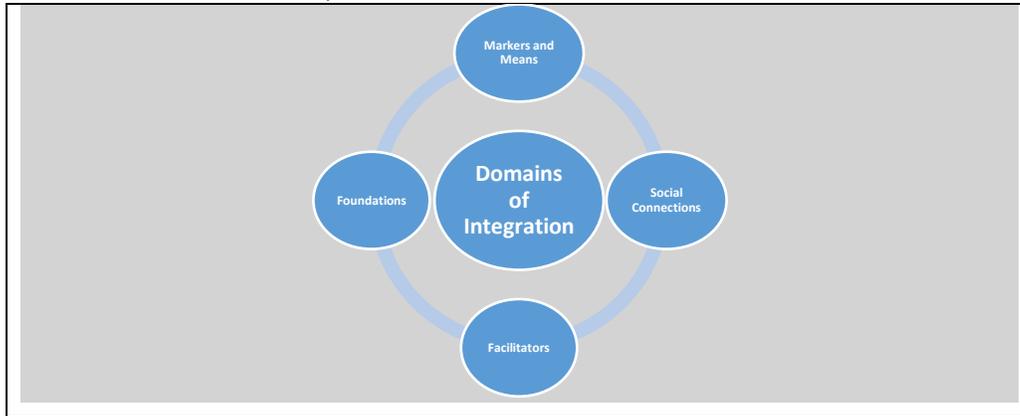
Any of the single strategy of integration does not fit for all situations rather different approaches need to be in practice depending on state's policy of immigrant integration in multicultural societies. Similarly policy of social cohesion mainly depends upon the duration, type and purpose of immigrants stay in the host communities. The process of integration helps societies in their stability and inclusiveness and for effective integration, enough social, financial, political investments needed to achieve long term benefits for all (IOM, 2017).

Active participation of migrants in hosting communities is called social inclusion. Successful integration involve access to health facilities and education to all migrants, opportunities of respectful livelihood and participation of migrants in civic activities also considered as great symbols of social integration between migrant and hosting communities. Apart from social and economic inclusion, social cohesion is also very important for social integration in which any discriminatory attitude is discouraged and there is a proper way to tackle any type of intolerance, prejudices etc against migrants. There is a dire need to promote mutual understanding on obligations and expectations from both communities.

Integration ensured when comprehensive and coherent policies on different sectors based on mutual understanding between States, stakeholders, intergovernmental organizations, private sectors, civil societies and migrant communities are in place. Such integration facilitates access to health, education and employment for migrants and hence social and economic inclusion of migrants become possible. When "whole of community" approach is adopted having clear understanding of expectations and obligations for all stakeholders, the integration become more effective 11. State's policy of preparing hosting communities for newcomers is succeeded when common values are sorted and migrants are empowered to develop their potential to become active members of the societies. There are numerous factors affecting social integration including reasons of migration, length of migration, socio-economic status, political climate and perceptions of hosting communities about migrants. Gender sensitive approaches also affect integration in addition to discrimination in public institutions as well as xenophobic attitude and abuse from host communities (WHO, 2017). Countering xenophobia is one of the salient commitment of New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants and it is consider as an essential step to facilitate good social integration of migrants (COM, 2016). Many migrants' considerations were specified in the light of New York Declaration and few actionable commitments were

also identified for successful social integration. These actionable commitments include access to labor market and financial inclusions; access to health; access to education; civil and political participation of migrants in host communities; family reunification; anti-discrimination and social cohesion (OECD/European Union, 2015).

Ager and Strang also presented different domains of integration as shown in figure below. According to them in the domain of maker and means, health, education, housing and employment related provisions are consider. In the domain of social connection social links, social bonds and



Social bridges are included while the domain of facilitators consists of safety, stability, language and cultural knowledge. In the domain of foundations rights and citizenship considered much important.

#### 1.4. METHODOLOGY

Social constructivism was considered as philosophical foundation of this study. Qualitative research design was adopted to explore the satisfactory answers of few research questions. Only 12 influential members of hosting and refugee communities were involved as participants of this study. These influential members of both communities were selected on the basis of their age group, occupation and education level. The participants from refugees community had more than 30-35 years of stay as refugees in Pakistan, they had their own business, they possessed 10<sup>th</sup> grade pass qualification while participants from hosting communities were of more than 30-35 years of age, representatives of business trade unions and teachers of private/public school and colleges. Rationale for selecting participants of specific demographic characteristics was due to the drastic change in the perceptions of hosting and state about AR. Members of this age group were aware of the evolution of change in perception. Members of this age group were witnessed of open door policy and close door policy about AR. Selection of male members doing different businesses (Carpet, Generator, Shopkeeper of Used utilities, fabric, hawkers) was due to the fact that on daily basis, they interacted lot of people around and they had observed attitude of general public at large. Selection of AR have specific qualification was due to their overall understanding and their specific knowledge about education system (in the absence of post primary education facilities in AR camps). Participants attended public as well as private schools in the hosting communities up to grade 10<sup>th</sup>. The participants from hosting communities were also selected on the basis of their age, business/occupation and educational level. Local participants comprised of business men, teachers of different educational institutions and of age 30-35 years. The rationale of their inclusion as participants of the study was due to maturity level, years of experience living with refugees, greater interaction as businessmen and teachers. All of these participants were well versed with the changing situation of AR and hence engaged fully in the study.

Firstly relevant literature was sorted out in order to understand why perceptions of hosting communities as well as the state has changed? Why open door policy for AR as guests, brothers at the time of need was completely changed into close door policy for AR as security threat, economic burden, smugglers etc.,? Secondly many stakeholders meetings were organized to discuss at length the issue of social integration of AR in Pakistan. Through active participation of members of stakeholders' meetings, participants were chosen and data was collected through semi structured interviews.

#### 1.5 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

##### a. Markers and Means

The data was collected through semi structure interviews from participants of AR community and hosting community. In the domain of markers and means as suggested by Ager and Strang, participants were asked to give their view on how to increase opportunities of livelihood for AR; how basic facilities of housing can be ensured for AR; how to make educational services accessible for AR and; how to improve health facilities to residents of AR camps in district Haripur, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. This domain includes above mentioned key areas which truly reflect social integration between communities. In support of this key area, Korac (2001) also stated that different policies of

integration and analysis frequently structure thinking about social integration between communities on these sectoral areas.

#### **b. Employment/Opportunities of Livelihood**

Being refugees, employment opportunities are not available for Afghans in Pakistan because according to the law, they don't have any quota in government, semi government or in autonomous organizations. Although registered AR who are skillful, educated are taken by the private organizations. In most of the cases, AR prefer to do business rather than to go for job. Opportunities of livelihood surely play vital role in integration process between communities due to economic independence, restoration of self-esteem, opportunities of interaction and self-reliance of AR.

One of the influential from AR stated that we are unable to seek any job in government sector. In this regard, according to Castles et al (2001), employment is considered as most important aspect of integration. Earning is associated with many other aspects like promotion of economic activities independently, future planning, interacting with member of hosting communities, help in developing language skills of refugees, restoring self-esteem and self-reliance of refugees (Africa Educational Trust 1998; Bloch 1999; Tomlinson and Egan 2002). AR who reached here more than 20 years ago don't have any education at all, while remaining those who entered after Taliban Regime have some basic qualification but unfortunately their standard of education is far below. They are able to read and write in English and Urdu. Most of the teachers who have more than 25 years of teaching experience in AR camps in Pakistan are unable to introduce themselves in Urdu. For the last 40 years, ARs were taught in their own mother tongue (Dari Pushto). AR with such qualification may succeed in Afghanistan but they cannot be inducted here in Pakistan on the basis of their terminal qualifications. Few AR who are doing businesses in Pakistan say:

"A businessman of Electric Generators said, I have been doing this business for the last 40 years and I am very successful in it. I have expanded my business a lot, many of my family members are adjusted in it, my children are getting education in reputed private schools, after registering myself as a refugee, and I did not face any problem regarding my business. I have very good relations with people of local communities, markets etc. I have not faced any prejudices from anyone. I do not want to go back in Afghanistan. Many of us did marry with local females and many of the locals married with AR female. When a female from AR got married with any local, she considered as Pakistani citizen while in reciprocal it is not true. Well of AR were very limited and almost all of these AR were settled easily in host communities. Many business they had started here like, general stores, honey bee forming, carpet weaving, selling old goods coming from European countries or from other developed countries etc. It is common practice of all AR that they use to keep their children involved in their businesses after schools or so. Remaining most of ARs were very poor and they don't have money to start their business, they did labor jobs in construction, fruits and vegetable market, cleaning of vehicles (low paid jobs), they were hawkers, cobblers, working in offices as office boys (serving officials with tea, coffee, lunch or dinner etc.). Many of our females and their kids also do labour in nearby villages at the time of picking peas, harvesting of vegetables, transportation of wheats from field to homes etc. These tasks are performed by hundreds of AR families, in these crops seasons, all children stopped going to schools and they started labour with their elders in the fields of hosting communities, and many AR are baggers".

The above statement surely reflects that AR who were educated and peaceful had established their businesses easily in hosting communities and they did not face any discrimination. Registered AR did not face any problem rather they enjoyed full cooperation from host communities. Their children got better education and enjoyed the equal opportunities in schools. This point reflects that hosting communities in Pakistan offer good services to AR and set good examples of social integration. If we talk about majority of AR, their conditions are pathetic. They are very poor, they don't have money to do any business, and they live with hand to mouth in AR camps. Their rights could not be protected, children could not be sent to school on regular basis, and they are forced to involve their children in earning money for life. Child labour is very common in AR and it is also observed that many AR who are doing business prefer to involve their children in business from their very early ages. This is also a fact that when children are involved in earning at their early ages, they stopped their education and they develop their interest in business. Generally they quit education. This is also a fact that by doing business, they do not become individual having good manners with peaceful minds rather they remain stick with their traditional culture. Brutality in their behavior occasionally reflected in their mutual fight resulted in bloodshed upon minor disputes.

#### **c. Housing**

Most of the AR are living in refugee camps, where they do not have very good accommodation. Generally each of AR family comprised of 8 to 12 members with very limited space to live. Many of those who are well off due to their businesses live in hosting communities and develop very good relationship with them. Those living outside of the refugee camps are socially integrated with people of their host communities than those who are restricted to their refugee camps. One of the respondents said;

"I live in a colony near the city. I have built my own house there and I am living peacefully with all other community members. I never ever found any ill behavior from local people rather we were even share our eatables with one another. We were actively participated in our religious rituals together". This situation was good about 10-15 years ago but now the situation is not as friendlier as it was in the past. Now local people look at us as suspicious due to involvement of few AR in criminal activities. In few occasions, some people also asked when you plan to go back? Now the situation has been entirely changed and we are welcomed as earlier".

The above paragraphs exactly reflects what has been written in different researches that AR were warmly welcomed by the local community most probably due to common cultural traditions including language, dress etc. They enjoyed full cooperation from hosting communities but now the hosting communities are at distant and they try to avoid us. The prior experiences of good social integration between both communities needs to be in place again. AR strongly wanted to live here in Pakistan amicably with local communities but some of them are destroying the situation through their involvement in illegal activities. Criminals should be thrown out and peaceful AR should be taken care of.

Another participants told that;

“I am living in AR camps and use to go in the market of fruit and vegetables as a hawker. Generally we do not face any problem but sometimes officials from security agencies check our identity and even some time local people yelling us why you are not leaving for your country. When sometime people show their aggression, we disheartened but they are to some extent righteous because of many of us blamed to have relations with terrorists”.

According to this statement, we can easily conclude that doing a business anywhere is not a problem as for as general environment is concerned but the involvement of AR in criminal activities in Pakistan make them suspicious for all and especially in the eyes of security agencies. It is also evident that many people from hosting communities also want AR to go back as early as possible and that's the reason behind state policy of sending AR to their native land. All of AR are not involved in criminal activities but as a whole they all are considered as criminals.

#### **d. Education**

Education is considered as a great source of social integration between refugee community and the host community. There are 21 schools in AR camps including one co-education school for both boys and girls while 13 schools are for boys and only 07 schools are for girls. All schools are of primary level and there is no elementary or secondary schools and there is no opportunity for both boys and girls to continue their education in AR camps. Very less number of children attend schools outside AR camps.

“One of the participant from outside AR camp said, the standard of education of AR children is too low and they cannot study with our students in traditional classes. He further said, the curriculum adopted in AR camps is quite different and their mode of teaching is also Pashto, so generally students of AR camps are very poor in Urdu language which is main mode of delivery in public schools”.

We can easily conclude that the poor quality of education at schools located in AR camps is one of the major reasons of low participation of children in education of AR in Pakistan. Teachers are reluctant that the AR students cannot be taught with low academic standards. Teachers of schools in AR camps are teaching students in Pashto and this is also a barriers for AR children to carry on the educational endeavor in public schools. There is no mechanism of teaching Urdu to AR children so that they can interact with other children of hosting communities, to develop their relationships and improve social integration.

One of the AR said;

“I cannot afford educational expenses of my kids so I do not send them to schools. I have four daughters and I never send them to schools outside of AR camps even if they get free education”.

Poverty is great barriers here in AR community due to which thousands of children do not attend schools. The above statement also reflects that ignorance prevails in AR camps and these AR are still very traditional and they do not consider girls' education as a basic right or it may has benefits for individual or the family etc. Enrollment of children in schools located outside of the AR camps is necessary for promoting social integration. It was reported that literacy rate of girls in AR is about 8% only and it is due to poverty on one side and the traditional thinking, ignorance of AR on the other side.

Another respondents told that

“My kids are getting education in private schools near AR camps. I am educated, I am doing my business here, I can afford school fee and other educational expenses of my children. From the start, I sent my children to private schools instead of sending them to AR schools. I personally think that the standard of teaching is very much poor in schools of AR camps. As a whole, we are very less in number who children are enrolled in public or private schools in Pakistan. In general, our AR community is very poor and it cannot afford educational expenses of children”

The above paragraph reflects another picture of the AR community. There are some people mostly who have established their business and they are well off. These people only can afford educational expenses of their children and their children are getting education regularly in private schools. It is also evident from the above paragraph that educated AR prefer to send their children to nearby public and private schools as they are not satisfied with the performance of teachers of schools located within AR camps. Their children easily learn Urdu language and carry on their education in formal setting and they do not face any problem.

Quality education is the universal objective of educational programme (Niwaz et al, 2011). Education clearly provides skills and competences in support of subsequent employment enabling people to become more constructive and active members of society. More generally, however, for refugee children (and, in many cases, refugee parents) schools are experienced as the most important place of contact with members of local host communities, playing an important role in establishing relationships supportive of integration. In the course of fieldwork we identified, for example, a number of support groups for parents run by schools which provided a useful focus for information on access to a range of local services. However there are a number of barriers towards effective integration in school.

#### **e. Health**

Basic health facilities are available for AR in camps and they are allowed to seek better health services in public and private hospitals across the city and in all big cities of Pakistan. Basic health units working in AR camps provide services for pregnant females, newborn infants and their mothers. Doctors practicing privately in the clinics also welcome AR and they are treated according to their disease. AR are socially integrate with local community completely. AR don't have proper health facilities at their door step as the host community has. In the current pandemic situation according to UNHCR (2020), it continued to extends its cash assistance programme as the government of Pakistan has started with the title of Federal Government's Ehsaas emergency program to vulnerable families. AR were included in this program and the poor got Rs.12000/month to cover four month period and this support was given to 36000 eligible AR families across the country during COVID-19.

#### **f. Social Bridges**

There are numerous festivals where both AR and host communities jointly celebrates e.g., Eid –ul-Fitr and Eid-ul-adha. Many of local members participated in these events in AR camps. Local people usually visit AR camps to buy Beef, domestic eggs of hens, Honey etc.

#### **g. Social Connection**

People of both host and AR are in good relationship with one another. There are many families who are engaged with one another in the form of marriages. There are numerous shopkeepers, hawkers and local workers who meet locals on daily basis. All these connections strengthen the social integration of both communities.

#### **h. Language and Cultural Knowledge**

Majority of AR are settled in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province of Pakistan where Pashtun tribe is dominant. Here in district Haripur, majority of local residents know and understand Pashto language (the language of AR). Due to the common language, AR are very close to local Pashto speakers. Pashtuns (Pashto speakers) have similar culture as that of AR so, this cultural aspect help both communities to come closer. Typical AR culture does not permit their female to go outside while local Pashtuns are to some extent lenient in this aspect. Due to strict culture of AR, girls' marriages in early years is common while in local communities Pashtuns do not practice this.

#### **i. Rights and Citizenship**

Citizenship is the mostly demanded by refugees across the globe and AR also urge to have this in Pakistan. As the literature indicated that most of Pakistani people do not want AR to be given the rights of citizenship in Pakistan rather the public demands AR to be sent back as early as possible due their involvement in illegal activities. Pakistan's citizenship act stipulates that;

“Citizenship by birth.— Every person born in Pakistan after the commencement of this Act shall be a citizen of Pakistan by birth: Provided that a person shall not be such a citizen by virtue of this section if at the time of his birth: -- (a) his father possesses such immunity from suit and legal process as is accorded to an every of an external sovereign power accredited in Pakistan and is not a citizen of Pakistan; or (b) His father is an enemy alien and the birth occurs in a place then under occupation by the enemy’ ( Pakistan Citizenship Act, 1951).

According to EUDO (2016), there is no provision in the law to deal with the citizenship of especially AR in Pakistan. The case of citizenship of AR are not accepted in Pakistan even if a child of an AR is born in Pakistan. Some ARs made effort to naturalize in Pakistan but their cases have been denied at administrative and judicial level. The present government of Pakistan has announced citizenship facilities to all Pakistan born AR but it faced lot of hostile reaction from all provincial governments hosting most of the AR on the basis of their experiences. Here in Pakistan, citizenship cases are dealt differently in case of AR as compared to other western or European countries. Other countries dealt with immigrants according to their rules and regulations particularly when number of refugees are less whereas the countries like Pakistan, Iran and Bangladesh are reluctant to offer citizenship to millions of refugees. If millions of refugees entered in any developed country of the world, the citizenship most probably would not be granted in usual manners. As for the basic rights are concerned, AR can open bank account; establish business, seek health services anywhere, avail opportunities of education in both private and public schools; live in normal colonies out of their AR camps (as thousands of AR already living) etc. According to Niwaz & Attaullah (2018), teachers and parents have to play their role in character building of kids.

#### **1.6 The Way Forward**

On the basis of results of this qualitative endeavor, following recommendations were made;

1. All the AR may be kept in designated AR villages and camps under strict security so that their involvement as facilitators to terrorists may be stopped and to restore the trust of the state and the hosting communities on AR as it was before 1995.
2. The culprits within the AR may be arrested and their cases may be referred to the speedy courts for justice on one side and the lesson for other AR on the other side.
3. Clear cut policy on refugees should be strengthened to implement Education policy for AR and solution strategy for AR in Pakistan through which social integration may be ensured between hosting and AR communities
4. State level decision on different issues also need to be taken into consideration by both Afghanistan and Pakistan for developing mutual respect and trust at public level

5. AR are enjoying full support in establishing their businesses in the towns and cities, the well-off business community of AR should come forward to increase awareness to the AR toward importance education and health.
6. Government of Pakistan should established schools in AR camps and AR villages for providing educational services to AR. The teachers of public schools may also need to welcome children from AR community to enroll them in schools.

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