

ABSTRACT

Refugee refers to any uprooted, homeless, involuntary migrant who has crossed a frontier and no longer posses the protection of his or her former government. Socio economic, political and environmental impacts of Afghan refugees are studied through a field investigation in N.W.F.P. A lengthy interview schedule was developed for local people & Afghan refugees and another interview schedule for the in depth understanding of the problem was prepared for interviewing scholars and experts. A total of 205 Afghan refugee respondents and also same number local people were randomly interviewed in the four purposely sampled cluster areas of N.W.F.P. Out of these four cluster areas, respondents were interviewed in Mansehra, Abbottabad, Chakdara, Kohat, North Waziristan, Mardan, Swabi and Peshawar.

The overall objective of the study was to find out the socio-economic, political and environmental impacts of the presence of the influx of Afghan refugees on the local society of N.W.F.P.

Four main sub-hypotheses were formulated on each one aspect of the understudy issue i.e. social, economic, politics and environment. On the basis of these four main sub-hypotheses other small sub-hypotheses were developed. All the small sub-hypotheses were tested by applying Chi Square test. The results were interpreted according to the objectives of the study.

The study reveals that there are significant social, economic, political and environmental impacts (both negative and positive), associated with the influx of Afghan refugees in the local society of N.W.F.P. These include some negative and positive affects on culture, language, fashion and dresses, burden on education institutions, burden on health facilities, pressure on social services, and introduction of social evils (problems) like Galemjum culture, Drugs culture, Kalashnikov culture and terrorism in the local society of N.W.F.P. The local people are apprehensive regarding their security due to Afghan refugees.

On the economic side, it was found that these Afghan refugees has caused price hike in many items of daily consumption and has caused increase in rents of houses and shops. It has also badly affected the local business. It has also affected the local labour by decreasing their wages and work availability. However some scholars believe that Afghan refugees have boosted local economy by investing in local economy and by international business in local society.

On political side, though it was found that Afghan refugees are not directly involved in local politics of NWFP. However the influx of Afghan refugees has caused polarization in the local political politics, i.e. one party support Jihad and Afghan refugees while the other group opposes Jihad and Afghan refugees. The rise of MMA in power (if not directly but indirectly Afghan refugees and Afghan war), Jihad culture, fundamentalism and sectarianism are caused by Afghan refugees in one way or the other way are caused by Afghan war and Afghan refugees.

On environment side, Afghan refugees have caused deforestation and loss of greenery & grassy lands in NWFP by the overgrazing of the livestock of the Afghan refugees, which has caused the disappearance of different

species of plants and animals in the local society of NWFP, which were there before Afghan refugees migration.

The current impacts for which Afghan refugees are considered responsible are the price hike and crises of meat and woods in local market.

To overcome all these problems it is suggested to the government that the movement and business activities of the refugees should be restricted within the legal limits of their camps and large concentration of refugees in one area should be fragmented for security reasons. It must also get financial assistance from international donor agencies to cope with the situations. The government should provide separate identity cards to the refugees, in order to check their illegal entry of new refugees. The immigration department should be properly monitored in cases of granting identity cards to the refugees.

Lastly a suitable political and consensus drawn solution should be provided with the help of Afghan leaders, Pakistan government, U.S government, other major powers and United Nations for a durable peace and political stability in Afghanistan.