



REFUGEE MIGRATION AND CRIMINAL ENTERPRISING: AN OVERVIEW OF ASSAULTIVE CRIMES AMONG AFGHAN REFUGEES

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ABSTRACT

The world is so rampant with violence and aggression that no one care or lament the loss of others. Even people want to be unarmed, they even want to restrict themselves to their houses, but the worst is the case that they are not protected at their doors step and window. The current study is an attempt to get to the fact to know about the assaultive nature of the Afghan refugees in the host society of Pakistan. The study is framed under the qualitative research design while using the qualitative tools to collect information from respondents in two districts of Malakand Division i.e., District Malakand and District Dir Lower. The two district jails were selected for identification of respondents where the data were drawn on the issues of assaultive crimes among respondents. The study has also concluded and has reached to the facts that the stiff, hard and aggressive nature of Afghans do not allow them to live with peace in host society of Pakistan.

Keywords: Crime, assault, aggression, refugees, violence

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I. INTRODUCTION

The world is everywhere so rampant with violence and aggression that even no one care or lament the loss of others. Nobody in this world is free of violence, either the committer or the victim. It is argued that if people wish to be unharmed, they should close themselves in houses; but keep in mind that the worst usually occurs at closed doors and windows (Brundtland, 2002). The concept of assault has been heavily debated inside the socio-criminological scholarships. It is sometimes confused with battery, while in its aggravated form; it is related to murder and homicide. On the grounds of unanimity, experts from both the fields agree upon a single notion that assault is an act of violence by a person including intimidation, putting fear and bringing injury (using hands, feet or any weapon) to another person, where the victim survives life (Siegel, 2007; Bartol, 1995; FBI, 1994). Moreover, assault in its broader view also encompasses the non-physical acts of disgust, malign, malice, harassment, and embarrassment against another person.

Similarly, the area and population of this study also confront the existence of assault in their social circles and most of the respondents agree to the notion that they are living in an assaultive world. The current research is also an attempt to investigate that Afghan refugees (being Pakhtuns) and Pakhtuns living in the area (i.e., Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province) share similar nurture and background, and both have violent attitudes and are usually socialized in similar way practicing (almost) the same norms and customs. Based on such similarities, they usually come in assaultive and violent contact with each other.

II. THE ARGUMENT

Pakistan has accommodated a large number of Afghan refugees since the occupation of Afghanistan by Soviet Union in 1979. The long protracted stay of such a huge segment in new society has brought miseries and hardships for the new comers into the foreign society. These hardships are further coupled when they come into conflict with the local population. Afghan refugees are obstinate and possessive about their nature, and any aggression from the

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outer side cannot be tolerated, particularly the issue is pertaining to the honor. They are caring about their codes of conduct, never tolerate any misconduct, and the person is said to be coward and his gallant (*Ghairat*), and respect (status) shall be question if it is not retaliated. The most appreciable thing on the part of Afghan to lay down his life than to be lived with maligned and disrespected by others. The argument here is to go after the assaultive crime in Afghan refugees, and to also investigate the reasons that why they are not refrained from such violence and perpetrating of aggression even above all they share the same cultural background with the local population.

III. METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Qualitative framework research design takes the lead in the conduction of the intended study. The sampled population was conveniently approached in the two prisons i.e., District Jail Malakand (District Malakand) and District Jail Timergara (District Dir Lower). The respondents were identified through a predetermined Two Points criterion such as (1) Afghan adult males convicted for assaultive crimes (2) having an age of thirty years or above. Based on the following criterion, (05) respondents were identified and selected from jail records. The information was derived from the respondents through interview guide, where an assurance was given to all the respondents that the confidentiality of the information would be ensured. The information which was collected from the respondents were first translated and then transcribed, and were also thematically discussed into the relevant themes under the thematic model of the Braun and Clark (2006).

IV. REFUGEES AND ASSAULTIVE CRIMES

A Siegel (2007) document that the assaults are frequently perpetrated as the life is everywhere stressful. In the current age of modernity and complexity, the life has become more stressful than ever especially for people who have left their soil in compulsions and live in miseries. In addition, their arrival (like Afghanis) to a country that itself is suffering from miseries, doubles and augments the miserable conditions of the new arrivals. In such scenario, they feel more stressed and frustrated and are prone to all forms of violence having overloaded assaultive thoughts and attitudes. It is commonly found that Afghan refugees in the research area usually come in conflict with each other while living in camps. Being impulsive in nature and disorganized in nurture, they don't tolerate minute acts of children and neighbors. They most often fight with each other on issues of children, sanitation, spreading of dirt in the streets and camps, smoke (derived from baking breads in *tandoor* 'an oven made of mud for baking breads') and noise made by children or adults etc.

"We (Afghanis) most often come in conflict with local people on account of our children. Once I had complained against a child to a local father that his son had beaten my son. He instead to focus on refraining his child from repeating such act was rather found motivating his child against Afghanis. I responded, to pay him in the same coin and beaten his child. He made complaint against me to the officials. At the end we both decided that we should resolve our issues through Jirga. Instead to decide the issue on merit rather it was decided to punish me with three hundred thousand rupees."

On the other hand, poverty and unemployment also fuel to the fire and intensifies the occurrence of assault, as one of the respondents shared his views of his conflict with wife:

"Once I (being an Afghan) had beaten my wife because of her insists and all the time demanding from me that I should fulfill my responsibility. I have done my master in Pakistan. I am jobless. I go after job and the whole day after searching it when I come back to home my wife starts demanding for different needs. I know my duties and responsibilities. It is the sole reasonability of a male member to provide for his wife and children. But what an educated can do? I can neither find job nor can I work as laborer. Under such circumstances, I have no other option except to go for beating my wife. All the demands she is expecting to fulfill are out of my range and the assistance we are provided from outside is not enough to fulfill our needs."

Moreover, Afghans being a strictly adhering tribe to Pakhtun codes do not compromise on their traditional and customary values. Although they do not own many assets being in the status of migrants, yet they are found in conflict with each other on things related to ancestry and inheritance. They never tolerate the external aggression and intrusion in their matters either pertaining to marriages, property and/or women. They are always found concerned about three things in their lives including money, women, and land (*Zar, Zan and Zameen*). Issues pertaining to such aspects are never tolerated and often end in bloodshed and killings. An Afghan considers it his sole obligation to protect his honor by saving his assets, while failing to fulfill such responsibility is a stigma of cowardice and against the valor of the person concerned.

"We never compromise on our honor because we are Pakhtuns, and our land and women are our honor. Once few Pakistanis used to sit in front of our home. Initially, I requested them to not fabricate my honor, but they refused."

One day, I along-with my brothers entangled them and thrashed them with sticks intensively and broke their hands and legs. In response, we confronted the police station and paid a huge amount as a fine to the bereaved family, but those guys are never seen again in our vicinity.”

“I have a business of clothes. Most of the customers take the items and promise to pay after some time. As it is a routine business, we let them bring the money some other time. One of my customers refused to pay back, which made me aggressive. We had an intense quarrel in which both of us were extremely injured. I took my money back, and because it was my honor, the food of my children; how can I leave it.”

Moreover, Afghans are always considered being more obstinate, intolerant, and rigid race. Although most of these characteristics look negative in their outer face, but most of them derive respect and status from these characteristics in their lives. As most of the respondents reflected that a person is said to be coward and his gallant (*Ghairat*), and respect (status) shall be questioned if he does not retaliate. It is obvious in respondents' opinions that one can afford to end his life but can't afford to be maligned and disrespected by others.

In addition, the unemployed segment in every society has proved to be lethal and troublemaking. The study of Khan (2016) admits that unemployed members used to be idles having a lot of free time to think. Such over-thinking frustrates them and most often lead them to adopt illegal ways for income, because they lack the legal mechanisms. The over-thinking and frustration turn them to act violently and produce aggressive personalities. In terms of Afghan refugees, the same situation becomes worst for them because unlike Pakistanis, they are unable to find social support in the neighborhoods. Their protracted unemployed status further hollows the socio-economic growth and development of the host country and cause serious threats to the country's peace and stability. In this context, the empirical data reflects as:

“I am idle for the last five years and have no work to do. My family considers me a burden on them because they must feed, clothe, and care for me. We are already in miserable conditions, and when a member of family like me becomes idle, leads to more issues. My brothers taunt me for being jobless. They scold me that I am good for nothing. These statements make me rebellion and most of the time I used to conflict with my siblings and parents. Once my brother taunted me for being idle, which I couldn't tolerate and assaulted over him. Hitting him with a glass (made of steel), his head bleed immensely and got eight stitches' wound in head.”

“We are living in extremely undesirable conditions. We have no jobs, no shelter, no food, no education, no social respect, no acceptance by the locals, no value; what we got is the 'hate' in this society. We do not deny working any sort of job. Our children below the age of ten years work in automobile workshops, hotels and sell tea on roads. And still, we have no social dignity. We are tired of this life, which makes us frustrated and aggressive. All the times we fight each other. Husband and wife, parents and children, siblings, and neighbors 'conflict with each other. We abuse each other verbally, beat one another and scold our children, because there is no harmony in our life. We are living a disorganized life like animals.”

Similarly, the prevalent literary and empirical information emphasize on the fact that the socio-economic status has a strong association with assaultive crimes. The affluent class in society is blessed with all the required means for life, where the opposite class is deprived of it; which predominantly comprises of refugees and other minority groups. Particularly, the refugees living in camps are more exposed and involved in assaults because of scarce resources and tough life. Academicians also accept the reality that crime is a lower class's phenomenon, where the people from lowest ebb have more opportunities and incentives to perpetrate offences (Siegel, 2007). In this context, the Afghan refugees in Pakistan have involvement both in instrumental and expressive crimes: they are instrumental criminals because of fulfilling the daily life needs, while become expressive criminals when unable to find solution to their problems of hunger, shelter, health and other basic needs. In response, they most often get frustrated and enraged, which turn them into violence and other forms of assault.

V. CONCLUSION

Hardly there has been anyone who would have avoided violence. It could have been avoided, but the worst is that violence usually occurs at doorsteps and windows. Violence has taken its different shapes and manifestation with most in terms of putting of a person into fear and bringing injury on him or her with hands, feet, or weapon. Afghan refugees confront the same attitude in their social circle and most of them agree to the notion that they are living in a state of assaultive world on arriving at the new conditions in Pakistan. Although the Afghan refugees bring with them some expectation that soon they are going to be integrated, but having shared similar culture and background they perpetrate assaultive and aggressive contact with locals. Migrating from one place to the other itself is suffering and disgusting. The empirical information has revealed that they feel frustrated, stressed and are prone towards all

forms of violence. They usually come in conflict with the local population on minor issues, such as minute acts of children are not tolerated and ended up with perpetrating of violence on each other. The data also revealed that Afghan refugees are more caring about three things in their life i.e., money, woman, and land. Any type of attack regarding such issue might bring bloodshed and killing in the closest neighborhoods. One of the sole obligations for an Afghan refugee is to protect his honor; any type of failure might lead to social disgusting and stigma of cowardice and is taken against the valor of the person concerned.

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