



## MIGRATION AND VIOLENCE: THE MIGRATORY DIMENSIONS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AMONG AFGHAN REFUGEES

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### ABSTRACT

Violence exists everywhere, it is not only the vanquished who has become victim to the violence, but the weak segment of society is also brought to such infliction. Similarly, the immigrants are also pushed into a quagmire where they are denied with their acceptance, identity, and even sometimes dealt with iron hand by not providing the basic facilities. Such a failure on both sides of receiving and origin compel the people to come in conflict with both inside and outside mechanism. The current research is an attempt to get to the fact about knowing the aggression among the Afghan refugees. The study is conducted under the framework of qualitative research design. The respondents were conveniently targeted for enacting of information. The research area was delimited to two refugee camps in two districts of Malakand division. The study concludes that the inability of the male segment in terms of finding employment, less accommodative background and disrespectful behavior shown both by the receiving and administrative society has left this segment in a state of uncertain environment with perpetrating of unbearable violence on women in both the outer and inner society.

**Keywords:** violence, frustration, poverty, gender roles

**JEL Codes:** J16

### I. INTRODUCTION

Women, children and elderly are always subjected to violence. Among them, women have the most vulnerable status as the family's honor in traditional societies is associated with them. Violence against women is not something that is individually practiced; rather it has been a part of the self-sustaining social system and become more publicly pronounced, when it is brought in the cultural, ethnic and religious superiority context (Brandon & Hafez, 2008). Women most often experience two types of violence; (1) forced marriages with someone they don't like and (2) sexual violence (which is mostly unreported and/or underreported). On arriving to the camps, most of the inside camp activities related to refugees are run by the international organizations. Services and structures everywhere are organized according to the "ideology of the equality" (Turner, 1999). While some special programs with the aim are brought to promote income generating opportunities for women. In this context, most of the studies indicate that in some of the camps women have been more successful in finding employment, especially when they are willing to take on the low skilled and low-paid jobs (Payne, 1998; Schrijvers, 1997). It is also common that in some of the camps women are found the primary providers for family. On the contrary, Women's earning becomes unacceptable for men when women gain some autonomy, they gain some power in home, with which they start challenging the roles of their husbands (Payne, 1998; Turner, 1999). Women who take the additional responsibility make complaints against their husbands that they are no longer like men in the house (Payne, 1998). The current study is an attempt to identify the different dimensions of violence towards refugees' women in.

### II. THE ARGUMENT

Pakistan has been one of the leading countries who have received a large number of Afghan refugees since the first migration has occurred on globe. There has not been left any stone unturned where they have not been provided

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support to Afghan refugees on their first arrival into Pakistan. The support which is provided to them at the initial encounter is not enough to live with. They are neither allowed to go for searching of jobs outside of the camps nor could they go to live with the support of their own. Instead of working to integrate the male segment of Afghan population into the mainstream society, the Afghan women challenge the existence of males, they are not accepted as sole protectors of families, and tension is mounted between them further leading to violence against each other. Such as an argument leads the researchers to go after finding the factors behind violence inflicting by men against women, and to also recommend that how it is lessened in refugees' society.

### III. METHODS AND PROCEDURES

This study was conducted qualitatively in order to the respondents where they have been involved in violence against women. The samples was conveniently targeted in two Afghan refugees camps i.e. one each of District Malakand and District Dir Lower. All the respondents were approached with following a two-point criterion such as those Afghan refugees were selected who were (1) males (2) have been involved in inflicting violence on their women. The information was derived from all of the respondents in the study through interview guide. They were also assured that they might quit the interview process if any of the interview questions might look offensive or irrelevant at any stage to them. Support was taken from the Braun and Clark's (2006) thematic model to analyze the data in the relevant themes. The interviews were first translated, carefully transcribed in order to bring them into the stage of discussions under the light of the literary information.

### IV. DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND AFGHAN REFUGEES

Gender roles are defined everywhere in the world. The role of a woman is defined; she is supposed to fulfill the responsibilities of being submissiveness to their husbands, rearing of children, cooking, providing hospitalities to the visitors, and managing the household resources. She has also to take care of the family's welfare. Much of her role is defined in relation to the husbands. She must observe submissiveness, always faithful, while demonstrating her fidelity; she must even ask and take permission from her husband to go out of homes. Likewise, the role of men is also defined. He must play the role of family's head and take care of the outside activities as well. The shift in gender role creates tensions and has been the source of conflict among most of refugees' homes, the data revealed: *"We are hesitant to send our daughters to schools because of the fear that they will either talk to strangers or could make some relations. Such a fear compels us to deprive our daughters from education. Education could earn for them to win their rights and provide for a place in the Pakhtun society, but this in turn, would challenge our centuries old cultural norms of male-dominance and patriarchy, which is barely acceptable to us. Most of the women who earn becomes autonomous and come in conflict with men, which further leads to violence"*

The refugees' women who were once submissive to their husbands are no longer ready to express deviance. Instead of living peacefully, they often challenge the culturally defined roles and normative authority of their husbands, which lead to violence against women. As one of the respondents is pointing out that why they (refugees) do not like to send their daughter to schools because:

*"We neither send our girls to schools nor arrange their marriages in outside community, because we don't know how long we would stay here. To get education costs a lot and we are unable to afford it. Getting them married at the earliest is the best policy for us (to earn money – because we "Afghans" take a handsome amount from the groom's family) instead of investing on their education, which does not benefit us economically. I have six daughters, and their marriages earn for me, while education is my loss. Further, educating the women brings harm to us; these women, when educated challenge our authority. Our customary laws do not let us obey the women, and education makes them lunatic (in practice, it is meant when a person deviates from the normative rules in either form). Such a clash between men and women, will obviously lead to violence because I have experienced few of Afghans' women who were educated and then not abiding the traditions; who in reaction were either killed, or beaten or divorced by their husbands"*

A study conducted by Horn (2010) has depicted that a man resorts to violence when he is unable to fulfill the needs of family. He usually develops to feel bad and inferiority complexes entangle him, which makes him aggressive and violent in most of the situations. The feeling of frustration, shame, humiliation and failure mean that he is very sensitive to any perceived attack, in this area, and is likely to overreact to small issues. A common trigger of violence in the home is said to be women's demands and husbands' inability to fulfill, and then women's exchange of harsh words, resulting in violence by men: for example;

*"I often come in a violent and assaultive clash with my wife on her demands that I couldn't fulfill. I am not a miser, but I don't have an income, which can afford such expenses. I wish, I could have enough money to fulfill my family's*

*every dream. I always expect her to care for me and reiterate her "da khpal saadar sara khpey ghazawa" (cut your coat according to your cloth). Budgeting constraints have always been issuing of concern among husbands and wives among refugees because none of them is financially stable"*

Some studies also depict that the displacement stresses have much debilitating impact in its form of trauma and adverse effects on psychological well beings before being departed from the countries of their origin (Boothby, Strang & Wessells, 2006). The psychological resilience is particularly tested of those refugees who are living in camps. Wessells and Monteiro (2004) depict that refugees experience a boring life living in camps, which is most often stressful (Kassam & Nanji, 2006). They are found less contented, feeling despondent, desperate, apathetic and helpless. The stresses sometimes get so heightened that the refugees instead of focusing on what would be their future, and to cope with the stresses they face in the protracted life in the camps, rather involve in petty household affairs. Under such circumstances they have left with no option except to inflict physical dominance on their women in order to maintain their authority at home.

*"I have beaten my wife once when she refused to serve my guest. I never tolerate this behavior of a wife; because cooking, washing, cleansing, childbearing and caring are the primary tasks of a woman in family, and she must do it without any excuse and complaint. The formula is very simple; Man earns and provides, while woman prepares and serves. Women have never been rightful to turn down on husbands' demands and orders. Women are naqis-ul-aqal (irrational) and kanjoos (miser), they do not welcome guests; but in our faith, guest is the blessing of Allah, which must be warmly welcomed and well-served"*

The conflict then affects every aspect of the married life including socio-economic life. Poverty is amplified, where there are limited opportunities of life. Economic stresses and the lack of resources that could have been the source of improving one's economic situations have become source of ongoing frustration for refugees (Miller & Rasco, 2004), with the potential to contribute to domestic violence (Carlson, 2005). There is tradition in Afghans that they demand for money to marry their daughter, where the non-payment usually leads to violence in their homes. Such traditions compel the poor segment among Afghans to elope with the girls, which gives birth to the menace of violent enmities. Apparently, it seems that the money demanded and taken in terms of marriage, the bride is sold out. It is common perception among all the people to come to know about this norm. A respondent clarifies such issue in the following manner:

*"Why you ask such type of questions? Would you take me to the jail/police station, or file a complaint against me in the Police station? (After ensuring the respondent to keep his privacy, he agreed to reply). Yes, we take money; but it's not about a business deal or selling and purchasing of women, rather we intend to assist the family in that context. It is a kind of social support that we (Afghans) give each other. Arranging a daughter's marriage is not an easy task; when we take the money, we support our daughters accordingly. It is also taken as a guarantee, because if the husband thinks to leave her; he will also think that if he wants to marry another girl, he would pay again. So, this money has reduced the ratio of divorce among Afghans. The issues are settled inside home, and girl feels secure at the husband's home"*

While taking of money is sometimes indispensable for the daughter's father because it is observed that the more you get money from the groom's family, higher will be the status of your daughter in his house. She will not only be prosperous there but will also face no threat; which is shared by one of the respondents as:

*"I neither be harsh nor beat my wife. How can you beat your wife when you pay for her? Those women are mostly beaten and treated harshly whose fathers have not taken the amount. We take care of them, because it's our property and if we lose it, we would pay again for having another wife; so, we just can't be cruel"*

On the contrary, more payment also becomes a misery for the girl (wife). Men who pay a large amount believe that the women are their sole properties and they can do whatever they want where the wife's family becomes helpless to intervene because of taking a huge amount. In this context, when the wife's family demands a divorce and keeps the girl at their home, then the wife's father must repay or return the money where a fine as decided by Jirga shall be paid to the husband.

## **V. CONCLUSION**

Each and every one whether he comes from the inside or outside of the country has the right to live with freedom of expression, without being restricted to a certain locality and he/ or she has also the right to earn and spend with his or her own free will. Similarly, they might not be refrained with depriving from enlisting with education or restricted with rules to not select their partners with their choice. But unfortunately each and every one of the Afghan refugees woman is almost deprived from the above mentioned basic rights. It was found that the existence of Afghan women

is always at stake not only in the country of origin but also at the receiving end. The literary information revealed that Afghan women are restricted in every respect of their rights. They can neither go with education, nor can they go with selecting their life partners with their free will. The data also determines different reasons in terms of not having benefited with such rights. For example, the Afghan refugees involvement in forced marriages are defended that following of such act is not against the culture, rather it is kind of support being given to groom family. Similarly restricting of women to homes to not giving them the right to go outside of their homes to go with education is defended that they (women) might go outside of the bounds and might snatch the rights of the male segment of society. It is also revealed that the main source of violence against women is due to the fact that the male segment has not fulfilled their sole responsibility as sole provider and being the main support of their family. Likewise, the administrative measures also do not allow these people into the mainstream society. They are restricted to camps with no option to go for searching of employment , nor can they are facilitated with any license to settle themselves in the labour market. The apathies being inflicted can only be lessened when both of these segments are accepted with long awaited respect both inside and outside of the society.

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