

PROTRACTED DISPLACEMENT ECONOMIES

UNIVERSITY OF PESHAWAR & UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX

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Figure 1: Beehives in Afghan Refugee Village in District Haripur, Pakistan

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Training Sessions in Department of Political Science, University of Peshawar





Figure 2: Afghan Refugee Village in District Haripur, Pakistan

ABOUT OUR PROJECT

The Protracted Displacement Economies (PDE) project explores the diversity of people's social and -economic experiences in communities, areas and places affected by displacement. This focus on 'affected communities', rather than distinguishing 'hosts' from 'refugees' helps to decrease ideas of difference between displaced people and 'hosts', and thus, challenge the idea of refugees and other displaced people as a burden on communities. Our approach allows us to think about ways in which people's mobility, even when unchosen, can create new possibilities for supportive interactions within and between communities.

BACK GROUND

Over 1.4 million registered Afghan refugees live in Pakistan, consisting of over 200,000 households[1]. This is besides the estimated more than 1 million undocumented Afghans. Among the registered refugees, who carry a valid Proof of Registration (PoR) card issued by the Government of Pakistan, around 444,500 reside in Refugee Villages (RVs)/ camps, and almost a million, who are stationed outside the RVs, live in rural and urban settings across all four provinces of Pakistan and the Islamabad Capital Territory. The majority of RVs are situated in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, which also hosts the greatest number of refugees in any province, i.e., 58 per cent of the total in Pakistan;[2] one of the reasons why it was chosen as the research site for the PDE project.

OUR OBJECTIVES

- To investigate economic activity amongst those affected by long-term displacement.
- To highlight sustainable economic activities; both those that already exist, and future opportunities.
- To analyse the barriers to inclusive and sustainable economic activities.
- To help build the skills of displaced people to communicate their own perspectives on sustainable economic practices.

[1] UNHCR. (December 31, 2020). 'Operational Portal: Refugee Situations'. Retrieved on March 1, 2021 from <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/country/pak#null>.

[2] UNHCR. (January 31, 2021). 'Pakistan: Overview of Afghan Refugee Population'. The UN Refugee Agency. Retrieved March 2, 2021 from file:///Users/shahidaaman/Downloads/Pakistan_Map_RegistredREF_v02_Jan2021v3.pdf.

RESEARCH APPROACH



Figure 3: Survey Enumerators in Haripur RV



Figure 4: Focus Group Preparation in Chitral



Figure 5: Survey Enumerators in Peshawar

RESEARCH SITES

1. TEHKAL BALA, PESHAWAR: 2. HARIPUR REFUGEE VILLAGE: 3. DROSH, CHITRAL



Figure 6: Research Sites

METHODS

3189



Baseline Household Surveys

598



Panel Household Surveys

272



Qualitative Interviews

09



In Depth Oral History Interviews

12



Focus Group Discussions

2



Films on Stories without Borders

49%

Female Sample, Qualitative Interviews

33%

Female Sample, Quantitative Baseline Surveys

45%

Afghans Households in Quantitative Baseline Surveys

55%

Pakistani Households in Quantitative Baseline Surveys

Comrade Obaid (2023)



The Labour of One's Own Hands is Beautiful (2023)



Figure 7: Stories Without Borders Film

RESEARCH FINDINGS

1. DISPLACEMENT AFFECTED COMMUNITIES: SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE

Livelihood and Income Sources

Although employment, agriculture and rent is the top earning source, employment done by the respondents is diverse. It ranges from common labour to skilled work. However, the more skilled jobs and the higher paying have comparatively lesser participation, especially from the refugee community. One reason is that the level of higher education is already less among the refugees and hosts alike, but more among the refugees (Table 2). In different areas, refugees are undertaking different work, for example, daily wage work, especially in construction (urban areas) and agriculture/ livestock (peri-urban and rural areas). In some specialised sectors, they have carved out a niche, such as butcher shops, bread making, soup stalls, Afghani burgers and others. In many areas, such as Chitral these were mostly done at home prior to Afghans arriving and settling there.

S.No	Work Type	Afghans	Pakistanis
1	Elementary Occupation: Daily Wage Labour	38%	49%
2	Services and Sales: Working in Shops	25%	14%
3	Craft and Related Trade Work: Skilled Work	24%	14%
4	Skilled Agriculture, Fishery, Forestry	4%	2%
5	Professionals	4%	10%
6	Technicians & Associated Professionals	1%	4%
7	Clerical Support Workers	1%	3%
8	Plant and Machine Operators	1%	1%
9	Managers	0%	1%
10	Armed Forces	0%	4%

Table 1: Livelihood and Income Sources

RESEARCH FINDINGS

1. DISPLACEMENT AFFECTED COMMUNITIES: SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE

Spending Pattern

The expenditure patterns for both hosts and refugees are quite similar with debt repayment having the highest call on family expenses followed by food and health. The qualitative data suggests almost all the households either owning some form of debt or lending debts to neighbours and relatives.

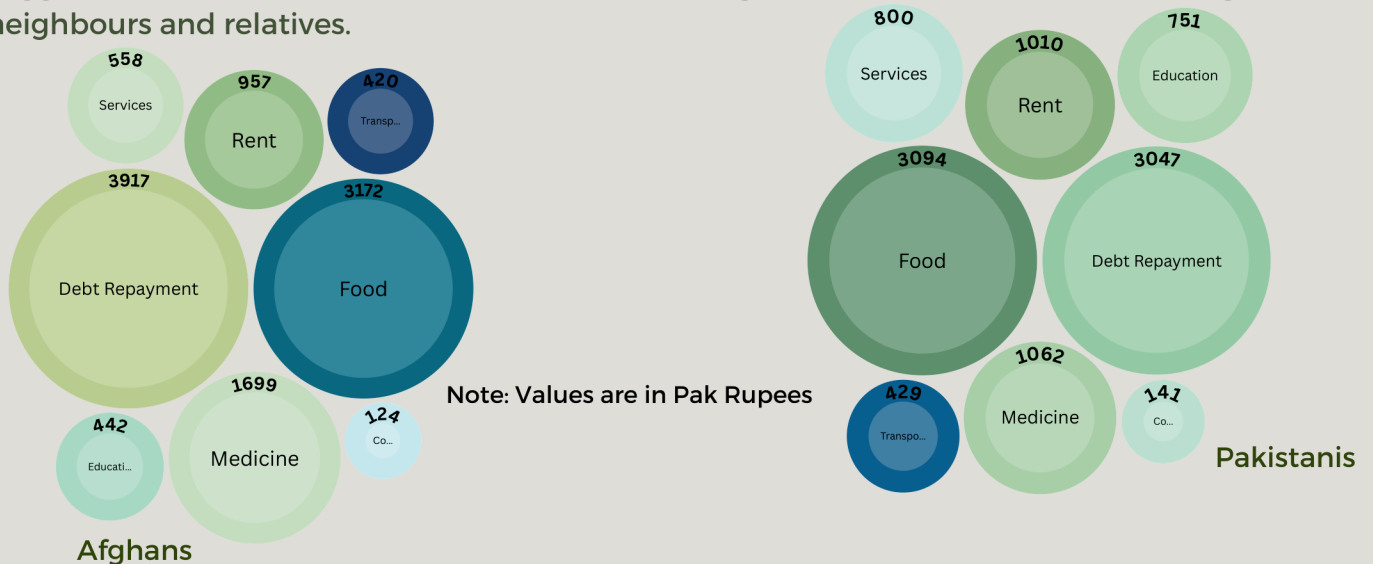


Figure 8: Individual Spending on various categories

Education

The stark reality for both the Pakistanis and the Afghans is that the number of people never attending school is remarkably high, though higher understandably for the refugees than for the hosts. One reason is that public sector educational institutions up to grade 12 are free for the locals. Though there is no bar on refugee kids taking admission in public sector schools, however, the socio-economic context is often more forbidding for the refugees than it is for the locals. Additionally, job opportunities for Afghans getting higher levels of education are drastically low therefore, the rate of higher education is lower in refugees than in host communities. The gender divide may be quite stark, especially for the refugees as there is a poor state of girls' education in the refugee villages. In the Haripur camp with over 100,000 residents, for example, there are no higher secondary schools for girls. Resultantly, most girls stay out of school after completing their 5th grade.

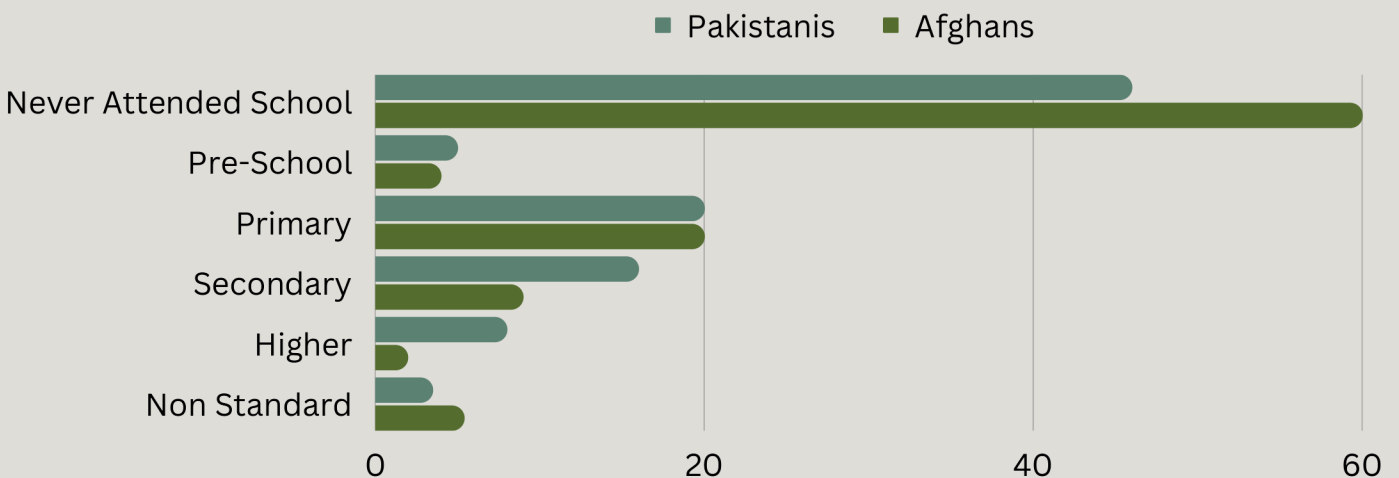


Figure 9: Educational Profile

RESEARCH FINDINGS

2. MUTUAL SUPPORT AND INTEGRATION

Displacement Affected Communities support each other financially and non-financially

Our quantitative data highlight the importance of neighbours as the main source of support within displacement-affected communities, alongside relatives and shopkeepers (these categories are not necessarily mutually exclusive), and in all three field sites. This support is particularly important because both financial and non-financial support from NGOs is predominantly irregular in all the field sites.

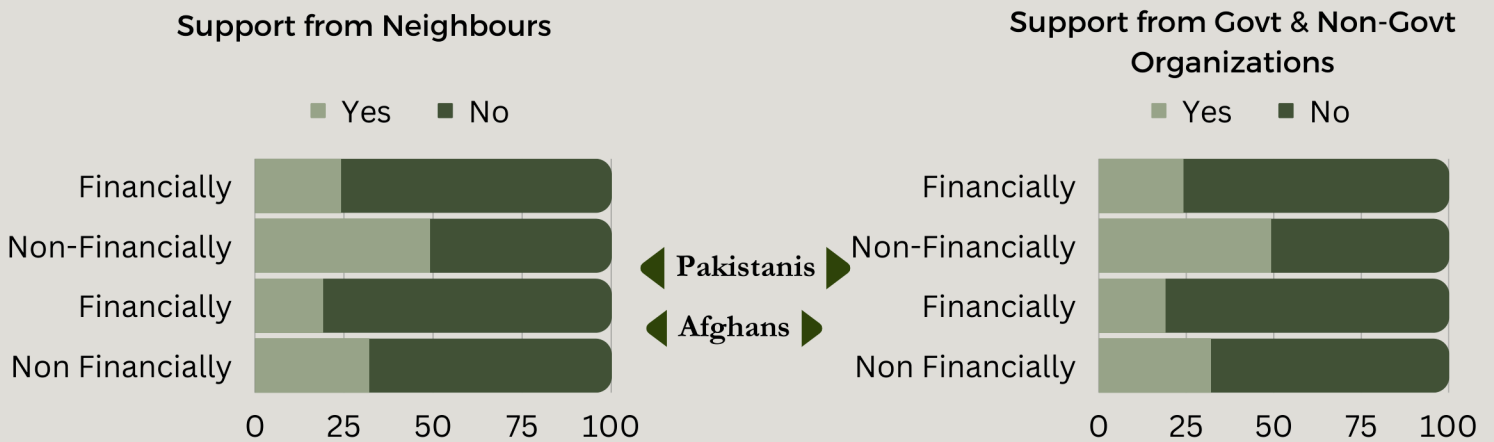


Figure 10: Support from Neighbours vs Organizations

Gham Khadi

The qualitative data delved deeper into this issue of mutual support and the findings show that there is considerable evidence of mutual aid and care in all the sites investigated in this study. Mutual support is extended to each other almost mandatorily on the occasions of Gham Khadi in all three field sites. The clearest indication of a displacement-affected community, rather than separate 'locals' and 'refugees', in all three sites, is the socio-cultural institution of gham khadi: the events surrounding an occasion of joy or sorrow (e.g., a wedding or funeral). It is also a key way in which people support each other. It was evident in all our fieldsites that participation in gham khadi was seen as a defining feature of a good neighbour. Gham Khadi creates a social network that nourishes the bonds of solidarity across the refugee-local divide. All the residents of a locality attend gham khadi and support each other emotionally, materially (money and food), and physically (through the provision of labour).

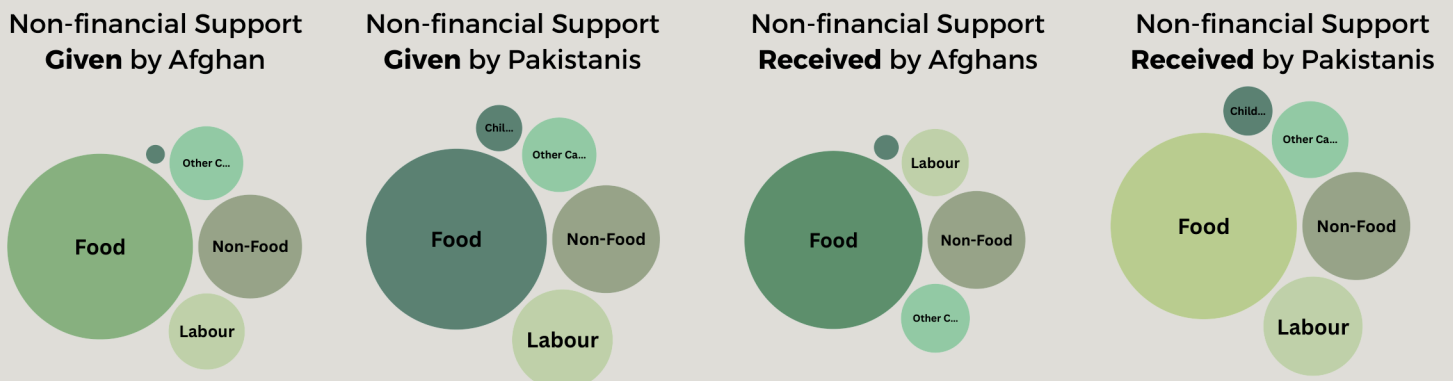


Figure 11: Care Economy: Mutual Aid by Neighbours

RESEARCH FINDINGS

2. MUTUAL SUPPORT AND INTEGRATION

Provisions of Food by Neighbours

Providing food is most common but in relation to funerals, clan members or neighbours will also collect cash contributions to help the aggrieved family and to cook and distribute food on a large scale for the guests gathered for condolences.

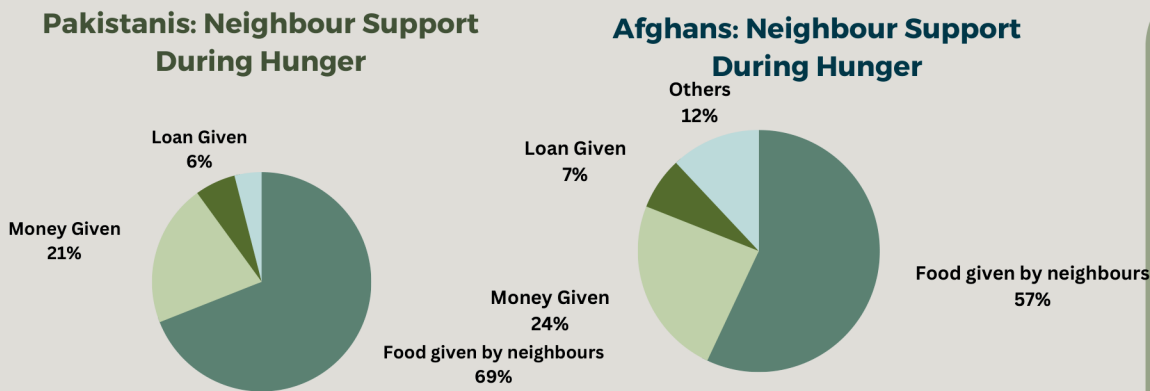
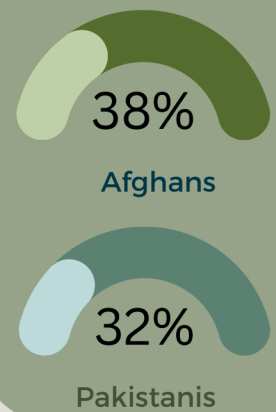


Figure 12: Care Economy: Provision of Food by Neighbours

Figure 13: HUNGER: No Food to Eat on some occasions



Provisions of Loans by Neighbours

Mutual support is also very prominent in the form of providing loans to each other. Both qualitative and quantitative data refer to mutual support provided through debts in times of crisis. Friends, relatives, and shopkeepers provide loans often without setting the date of repayment and are largely interest-free.

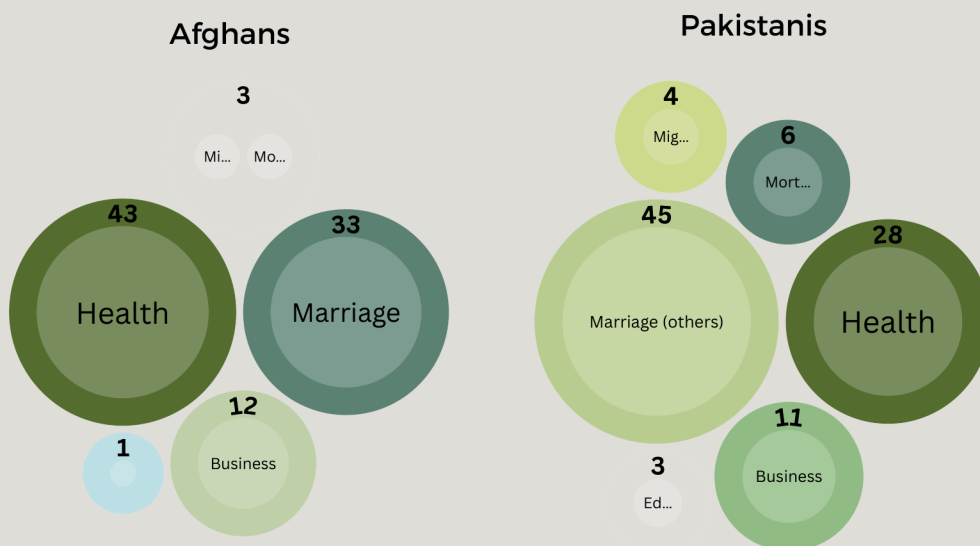
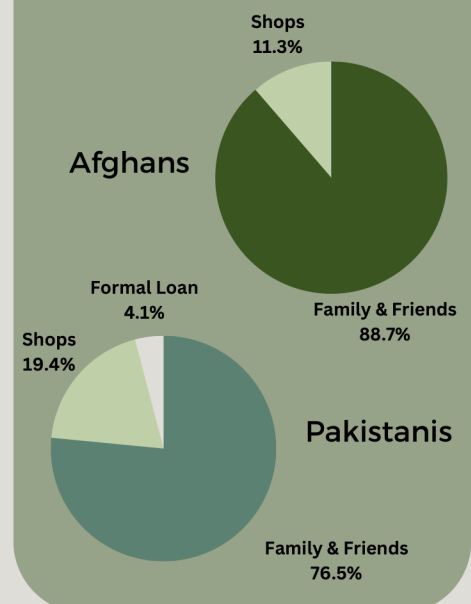


Figure 14: Reasons for Debts

Figure 15: Debts Owed To



Average Value of Debts (Pakistanis): Rs. 116,107

Average Value of Debts (Afghans): Rs. 168,207

RESEARCH FINDINGS

2. MUTUAL SUPPORT AND INTEGRATION

Provisions of Support to Find Work

Mutual support also takes the form of information regarding work and arranging to access it. Friends, relatives, and neighbours inform each other about the availability of daily wage work in the labour market. Similarly, relatives and young friends help each other out by sharing information about migrating abroad for work and sending remittances back home. Several respondents in Haripur expressed that they were helped by friends and relatives to migrate abroad (predominantly to the Middle East and Europe).

An Afghan Resident of Haripur Refugee Village said

“Yes, they [friends] do help each other. Of course, as I told you my friend is Kharoti by tribe. He is from Kunduz, and I am from Samangan, but we are friends. He sends me money whenever I need it. I will repay him the Rs. 500,000 [US\$ 1,740] he gave me as a loan. He gave it to me for my child’s education and marriage”

“We help each other both physically and in terms of finances as well. We give financial support, according to our capacity, to those who need, it for arranging gham khadi events. we also take food items when we visit them. Sometimes we buy them rice and oil and sometimes we buy them sugar [...] We go to the graveyard and help in making the grave for the departed soul. We also serve their guests in the hujras [male guesthouse and gathering space]. We bring meals for the guests [...] we visit the patients and ask about their well-being. We take fruits with us. We have such kind of relationship with Chitralis

An Afghan Resident of Drosh, Chitral Stated

Inter-Marriages

There are some interesting findings relating to marriage across the three field sites. Inter-marriages between Afghans and ‘Pakistanis’ are more prominent in Chitral than in the other two sites, which is perhaps surprising because Afghans – predominantly Pashtun – are ethnically different from Chitralis. However, they have integrated well through learning the local language, attending schools outside the refugee camps, and developing work-related friendships.

“One of my brothers who died before migration had a son. I raised him, arranged his marriage, and currently, I am supporting him along with his children. A few days ago, he had a medical condition, in which he had to go through surgery. He is a poor person, having no money for food. The cost of his surgery was Rs. 40,000 [US\$ 140]. Then I arranged another doctor for him in Haripur who did the same surgery at the cost of Rs. 20,000. I gave him Rs. 10,000 and the rest was arranged by my [other] brother (An Afghan Refugee from Haripur)

An Afghan Shopkeeper of Haripur RV Revealed

RESEARCH FINDINGS

2. MUTUAL SUPPORT AND INTEGRATION

Economic Integration

Our research confirms that refugees' economic contributions are predominantly in the 'informal economy' because of the significant constraints to their involvement in the formal side of the economy. Refugees have created niches in agricultural and economic activities. In some specialized sectors, they have carved out a particular function, such as butcher shops, bread making, soup stalls, Afghani burgers, English language and IT training academies, Music Schools and others.

Often the knowledge they used to do this was built on previous experience in Afghanistan. Their contribution to the agricultural sector stands out. They are working to cultivate land via informal land tenureship arrangements, or as daily wage farm workers. In all three field sites, Afghan refugees have been cultivating locally owned land for generations. However, being Afghan and not having access to legal residency status also disempowers refugees in formal workspaces, restricting access to professional employment and formalized business ownership. Afghan participation in economic life has, however, also generated tensions with the 'locals'. Our qualitative data suggest Pakistanis, especially from the urban and peri-urban sites of Tehkal, Peshawar, resent the economic penetration of Afghans in businesses.

Figure 15: A shop run by an Afghan Refugee



RESEARCH FINDINGS

2. MUTUAL SUPPORT AND INTEGRATION



Figure 16: Bazaar of Pannia RV, Haripur

Displacement Affected People have developed long-term work-based networks

Although formal work or business partnerships are rare, work-related networks are developed between displaced people and host communities. These networks are essential for passing on information related to work, gaining access to work, and exchanging goods and money. These networks may include buyer and seller, landlord and tenant, co-workers, debtor and lender, etc. Qualitative data refer to such networks of relationship across national boundaries Pakistani/Afghans, ethnic boundaries, Pashtun/non-Pashtuns and tribal/clan. Often these networks do not remain strictly work-related and may grow into social relationships through friendship and intermarriages. These networks are reinforced and strengthened through the practice of gham khadi.

NGOs, Commissionerate for Afghan Refugees (CAR) and Intermediaries

The protracted nature of displacement from Afghanistan to Pakistan means that although the role of UNHCR and other refugee-related authorities (particularly CAR) are still important, humanitarian actors do not have a major role in people's day-to-day lives.

Instead, so-called 'informal' authorities shape displacement-affected communities. There are certain intermediaries situated within and between the displacement-affected communities. Some prominent intermediaries include mesharan (elders and other 'leaders'), maliks, elected representatives, social welfare actors, community mobilisers, landlords, and aristocratic landlords (Shahazada, in Chitral) and imams (prayer leaders in the mosques). These intermediaries provide social and political leadership and serve as channels through which government institutions, INGOs, NGOs, etc negotiate for the provision of aid and other services. Despite the multifaceted role played by these intermediaries, their authority is also sometimes contested due to controversies related to their effectiveness in displacement settings, we observed this in Chitral and Haripur

RESEARCH FINDINGS

3. WOMEN CONTRIBUTE TO LOCAL ECONOMIES



Figure 17: Carpet Weaving in Haripur RV

Our data suggests that gender and socio-economic position intersects with refugee identity to make life particularly challenging for Afghan women. Culturally and socially, most care work is done by women. Afghan women are also more culturally restrained than Pakistani women and Afghan men when it comes to seeking employment outside the home. Almost none are doing paid work in any capacity outside the camps.

However, inside the camps, some of the women are generating small incomes through home-based artisanship or crafts, such as stitching clothes, embroidery, quilt making, wool thread making and in some parts of the camps, carpet weaving.

Nevertheless, refugee women face a disconnect between their skills (sometimes imparted by NGO training, sometimes brought with them from Afghanistan) and potential middlemen or buyers/markets. While some of the refugee men in camps did have bank accounts, none of the women did. Some women are appointed by CAR as community mobilisers in the camps, but their refugee status intersects with their gender to make them vulnerable to harassment, some interviewees suggested this was particularly the case if they had to report to them outside the camp, in offices located in cities and towns.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

3. WOMEN CONTRIBUTE TO LOCAL ECONOMIES

Despite these challenges, some women are contributing to local economies, in addition to the more obvious contribution of caring and domestic work enabling other household members to engage in paid labour. In all our fieldsites, small home-based work, such as embroidery, wool thread making, quilt making and preparing food to be sold by their male relatives are most common. In the Uzbek area of Haripur Camp, women's higher-end skills such as carpet weaving are visible. In urban areas, some Afghan women also operate their own beauty businesses in bazaars. Some women also work in low-level jobs in NGOs, IGOs or as teachers at local, mostly camp schools.

Qualitative data also suggests some NGOs have offered training to start home-based work (stitching or sewing), but such opportunities are sparse, and usually do not come with either tools to practice the same, or with the requisite skills to connect participants to local markets. Women respondents said they are keen to work with their limited skills.

The absence of higher secondary schools for girls in Refugee Villages and the persistent demand by camp residents to open schools of higher learning to enable girls to pursue essential schooling at camps are clearly highlighted by the research. Travel expenses, security reasons, and cultural constraints restrict girls' access to government schools in Haripur itself. Research participants have invested what they can in their children's education, but with only limited resources and a pragmatic understanding of the current labour market, have focussed on boys' education.

Figure 18: Inside a Refugee House, Pannia RV, Haripur



RECOMMENDATIONS

1. livelihood and employment

1. Women respondents said they are keen to work with their limited skills, especially those in the RVs. NGOs and IGOs should help women develop new skills, to start honey-making businesses, jams, jelly, marmalades, pickle-making, and tailoring. Home-based work would be best in this cultural context. Keeping in view the cultural sensitivities, and with adequate training, young and educated women should also be provided with opportunities to exercise their agencies outside their homes in skill based jobs, most probably initially in gender segregated work spaces.
2. The NGOs, INGOs and Government should provide technology-based entrepreneurship opportunities for young graduates. This would include the provision of skills and community spaces for young entrepreneurs to start their businesses or provide their skills online. The government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's programme called Durshal (gateway) should be opened to Afghan refugees also.
3. The Government should allow Afghan entrepreneurs to register their businesses and own property, especially for entrepreneurs who are already based in Pakistan and running businesses in partnerships or in the names of their Pakistani friends.
4. Refugees have skills but further training will expand their options. In recognition of the existing skills and activities within local economies, NGOs and other stakeholders should procure services from and within displacement-affected communities, to address pressing needs. such as water and electricity, and support reinvestment of income into local community needs.
5. Development agencies should help integrate local businesses and their products into markets

2. Banking and Finance

1. Government or Non-Governmental Organizations should extend seed funding and other resources to enable the expansion of existing Afghan-led businesses to wider markets and the setting up of new enterprises, particularly where existing skills are apparent.
2. The Financial/banking Sector should remove unnecessary barriers to opening bank accounts for Afghan refugees for helping to grow their savings as well as investment opportunities. Removal of barriers to Accessing formal banking credit can help support small and medium sized entrepreneurship.
3. Micro-financing for small home based businesses, specifically targeting refugees and females to develop small businesses on Akhuwat's pattern is needed.

3. Mobility and Crises

1. In order to give Afghans in more remote areas, such as Chitral access to urban health and employment opportunities, there needs to be a reversal of increased restrictions on Afghan mobility which have increased since the international withdrawal from Afghanistan.
2. In order to offset the impact of non assistance of emergency cash distributions, the development sector and the government must keep the refugee population informed while such cash is distributed to overcome the impacts of crises, such as Covid.

RECOMMENDATIONS

4. Education

1. The agencies engaged in Afghan Refugee Villages should prioritise establishing higher secondary schools for girls, particularly in Haripur. International aid should increase the fund's existing community investment in boys' education with support for girls' schools.
2. Educated young girls from the locality should be engaged in teaching young children in community schools.

5. Health

1. The government of Pakistan should include the presence of documented and undocumented Afghan populations in public services and development planning provisions such as health, education, water and sanitation.
2. Given the high proportion of expenditure on debt repayments (and the significance of ill health as a reason for taking on debt), subsidizing better, more affordable, healthcare options for people in displacement-affected communities, will free up household resources for more productive expenditure. This will require partnerships between migration sector actors and health care service providers, both public and private, in Pakistan.
3. The developmental agencies and the government must extend health facilities in local camp Basic Health Units (BHUs), by upgrading them and providing doctors and trained nurses on a permanent basis.
4. In order to control the disproportionate increase in population, including in the camps, family planning initiatives should be approached via the use of supportive religious textual arguments on one hand and reference to the practices adopted elsewhere in the world.

Figure 19: Health Center in Haripur RV



Field Work in Peshawar



Field Work in Chitral



Field Work in Haripur



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