

Educational and Skill Need Assessment of Urban Afghan Settlers

CHURCH WORLD SERVICE PAKISTAN/AFGHANISTAN
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Study Methodology

The study is descriptive in nature and based on field results and interviews with the individuals. People from various walks of life were interviewed and consulted personally and sometimes in-groups. The stakeholders include political activists, skilled and non-skilled people from the non-formal sector, estate agents, women folk, youth, elders, counsellors, health workers, CBO members, small scale businessmen, scavengers, mosque preachers (maulvis) etc. Most of the information provided by them was cross-checked from other sources for the sake of authenticity.

The scope of the study is limited only to needs assessment of those invisible Urban Afghan Settlers who over the years have managed to settle, in the slums or squatter settlements of urban cities like Lahore and Karachi and mingle with the local population, yet they lack many of those resources that are comparatively better accessed by the locals. This need assessment and its' outcome is perceived to serve its' envisaged objective in both situations i.e. whether these immigrants choose to stay here or whether they go back to their motherland.

For area selection the indicator applied is that there must be a considerable number of Afghans refugees living in the locality surveyed, no matter what is their span of residence has been. The indicators applied for the selection of stakeholders is that they should be able to provide information about their historical background, socio-economic profile, present activities, infrastructure of their settlement area and the social dynamics of the community.

There were numerous constraints integrated with the study which can be classified as follows:

1. In the absence of official statistics and demarcation of Urban Afghan Settlements, it is difficult to precisely point out the localities of Afghan settlers.

2. Once the localities are known, it is an uphill task to identify Afghans with a degree of confidence because majority of them entirely deny any link with Afghanistan and claim to have migrated from Peshawar to prove it they have fake but official valid Pakistani documents.
3. Post eleven September events and the investigations of law enforcing agencies gave birth to a feeling of insecurity amongst these Afghans. They are conscious, insecure and tight-lipped about various aspects of information.
4. To access women, in most of the case, proved to be a difficult target since the cultural taboos do not allow them to be much expressive in front of strangers, if at all they could be allowed to see them.

The attitude of religious elements was antagonistic and threatening. Researchers faced threats of *Jihad* against them and were charged as spy of foreign elements. To dig out the real economic status also proved to be difficult. Mainly because majority was reluctant to disclose their 'actual' means and source of income, and also because irrespective of their economic status these people are by and large settled in low-income and slum communities, amid extremely miserable living conditions.

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Introduction

No other city in the Sindh province has been more effected by the events happening in Afghanistan than Karachi. Over 1/3 of the total refugee population settled in Pakistan made its' way to Karachi. Karachi's unparalleled migration pressure derives from a combination of causes. It is the potential recipients of immigrants from Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Burma and from other countries. To migrants from up country, Karachi is their "natural" legitimate destiny. Finally its' "reception" towards the immigrants population has been equally generous. Karachi is at the threshold of a serious social, political and economic crisis due to the mass scale of migration in recent years, coupled with the prospect of a further uncontrolled escalation. Before comprehending and analysing the assessed educational and skill needs of Afghans, which is the prime objective of the study undertaken, it is better to consider the following factors, as they would contribute in establishing the context:

The Spatial Distribution of Afghans

Portraying the geographical distributions of refugees is problematic due to their status as Pakistani citizens. Unlike migrants from other countries they cannot be identified from official statistics. At the city and Province level this means that there is no authentic data available to quote for the total Afghan refugees but only an aggregate with total Pashtoon population from NWFP. We can apply certain factors based on empirical studies that can provide us with approximate figures. The accuracy of figures obtained will decline with the passage of time due to multiple reasons.

The estimate of Urban Afghan settlers in Karachi range from as low as 0.2 million to as high as 0.8 million. Though distributed all across Karachi, they are more visible in following Pashto speaking Pathan settlements.

1. Sohrab Goth (Super Highway)
2. Orangi Town

3. Metroville
4. Sheerin Jinnah Colony
5. Malir

The roaming scavengers, most of them are Afghans who migrated in post Najibullah period, have nomadic lifestyle and do not reside anywhere permanently. However the major waste sorting points of these scavengers, after picking up the waste, were identified by the Deputy Commissioners of five districts from earlier held set up of Karachi.

Explanatory Note

The settlement pattern and lack of proper administrative infrastructure for the support of migrant population are the key factors behind the difficulties in the explanation of existing spatial distribution of Urban Afghan Settlers (UAS). The migration pattern does not have any link with Pakistan's political and economic conditions, rather it is related to the economical and political instability at home of these refugees. Following settlement patterns are observed in Karachi for UAS:

They mostly reside within or near existent Pashto-speaking settlements.

1. They usually occupy state land and construct their humble homes on the occupied land.
2. They prefer to retain their rural culture and lifestyle, so if possible they manage to possess large piece of land where they could also keep the live stock. Nevertheless, situation varies from area to area.
3. With time, spatial concentrations of migrants build up as behavioural factors so influential in all long-distance migration flows, come to the fore.
4. Associating with the family is especially important. The arrived settlers always demonstrate a strong desire to live in places where relatives, family friends or atleast "Pashto speaking brothers" are already residing. Though at times the preference for job opportunities becomes a priority over social considerations. These factors have a major bearing on the political scene of the city.

Summing it up we can say that economic and social considerations decide about the spatial distribution of these settlers.

One observation, which should be verified before standardising as a general statement, is that the Afghans have two preferences while selecting the settlement. Firstly, it should be near the employment opportunity section of the city like SITE and Orangi Town. Secondly, it should be near the major High ways. The behavioural tendencies of these settlers put a lot of pressure on the socio-political structure of the host city and keeping in view that further migration is inevitable, the city government is bound to take remedial action. The integration problem encountered by the Afghan settlers is considered next.

Integration Problem of Settlers

In a Multi-ethnic city like Karachi, the integration issue can be viewed at two levels. First is the integration with the immediate host Pashto speaking population and second integration with other ethnic and cultural groups (non-Pashto speaking) of the city. In the absence of state policy for integration of settlers the phenomenon of integration always remains unpredictable, as other factors heavily dominate it. The three major areas of concern are housing, social integration and economic integration.

Housing

Scarcity of affordable accommodation with the availability of bare minimum utilities is a pressing issue for majority of Afghans. The city is already suffering a backlog of housing units¹. The Afghans usually build houses on already congested land, putting immense pressure on health and family life. The absence of proper supply of potable water, sewerage facility and disposal of solid waste results in a number of skin diseases and pregnancy related problems. The area of Metroville is an exception to that since a big majority of Afghans living there are affluent. Keeping exceptions aside, the acute shortage of low-cost housing in

¹ Understanding Karachi by Arif Hasan et al, 1998

urban areas is predicted to continue and the housing prospects of Afghan families will depend primarily on the speed of social and economic integration.

Social Integration

Problems of social integration are related to spatial distribution and economic status to which Urban Afghans belong. The Afghans show a strong desire to concentrate with families, friends and Pashto speaking population, since these provide a network of social contact and assist them in coping with life in new surroundings. This result in increased density in some areas and puts high demands on social facilities besides putting extra pressures on infrastructure. This clustering tendency is also seen as a factor that hinders integration by engendering a sense of isolation and contributing to the low levels of social acceptance of Afghan settlers.

Those who are of Tajik or Uzbek origin, and can only communicate in Persian language face the most severe forms of difficulties. They are settled more in Sohrab Goth area than in Orangi town or Metroville. Afghans are used to have more organised communal ways of life with more emphasis on religion and tribal values, therefore they are partly out of step with the materialism of the contemporary society and place less emphasis on competition. Further the Afghans from rural areas appear to lack the institutional and organisational pre-requisites for developing social networks wider than those of the immediate circle of friends or relatives. This is reflected in the lack of their CBO formation capacity or forming a strong political party of their own.

Sociologically, therefore, Afghans settlers are best understood as a collection of diverse migrant groups, rather than as a subset of Karachi population, they have individual migration histories and background, which exerts a strong influence on their integration probability in Karachi society.

Economic Integration

Most Afghans are handicapped by their poor knowledge of Urdu and English, which makes them unfit for sophisticated job market of Karachi. Nevertheless their capacity to work hard makes them fit for earthwork, construction industry, carpet industry, laborious sales jobs and *Roti* making on Tandoor (nan-shops). They actually fit themselves almost in the same niche as carved by earlier settled Pashto speaking Pathans from NWFP.

Their entrepreneurial skills do them most favour for economic integration with rest of the city. They usually trade in smuggled goods, cloths and garments and leather goods. They do it by simply selling the stuff in the streets or by owning shops in Khurshid Cloth Market – Hyderi and in Rabi Centre.

Perception of Local Communities

The Pashto speaking people from NWFP are very vocal about the fact that there is no difference between Pashto speaking Pathans living in Pakistan and those living in Afghanistan. So they are absolutely supportive of them except some activists of ANP who, since formerly support communist regimes in Afghanistan considered refugees as the traitors of revolution.

The rest of the communities living in Karachi consider the Afghans as hard working but are suspicious of their involvement in drug trafficking and arms smuggling. The scavengers in the streets, most of them are migrants Afghans, with the passage of time has earned sympathies as they represent poorest of the poor segment of the society. It is a common impression that the Afghans trade girls in the name of marriage. Further, they are using Karachi as a launching pad to move towards Gulf States and European countries and America. It is a common perception that they do not show their real incomes but their perception is valid only for relatively affluent Afghans.

Occupation

In Karachi the Tajik and Uzbek Afghans, as they are called, are inclined towards jobs in industries. Their women also prefer to work and are employed in local industries.

The Pashto-speaking Afghans are more for business, no matter how small it may be. They are in selling clothes and garments, electronic items & leather goods. Many Afghans own small purchase shops in the same locality where they reside. The relatively affluent Afghans own shops in Hyderi & Tariq Road. Some also put stalls in weekly bazaars. Provision of necessary goods or loans with mark-up on interest is also one of the occupations these settlers are involved in.

The majority of Pashto speaking Afghan women is not allowed going outside the home for jobs and their major chunk of time is occupied in child rearing and bearing, cooking food and looking after livestock. Some elderly women however own shops (small grocery stores) in the same area.

The Tajik and Uzbek Afghans women are more liberal and they are employed as teachers in local schools in Sohrab Goth area on English language coaching centre.

1.0 Areas Visited

Karachi

The areas visited in Karachi during the course of this study are:

1. Islamia Colony
2. Muslimabad
3. MPR Colony
4. Hasan Nauman Colony
5. Al-Asif Square

Besides the above mentioned following areas were also surveyed for a quick response to our queries which are derived from the objective of the study:

1. Nusrat Bhutto Colony
2. Machhar Colony

Though there are lot many other places to visit but due to following reasons these areas were preferred.

1. These were more accessible for research in the present context of war in Afghanistan.
2. The strikes and disturbance in the city was an impediment for going to relatively remote areas like Malir/ Qaidabad for security purpose.
3. With the passage of time, stereotype responses were emerging from the respondents vis-à-vis educational and skill requirements. So as the time passed, the learning curve straightens.

Those who were consulted, discussed and interviewed included:

1. Estate Agents
2. Maulvis
3. Shopkeepers
4. Youth
5. Businessmen
6. Political Agents
7. Cart Vendors

Unfortunately there were no Afghan teacher available in areas, except Sohrab Goth, but there the teachers refused to talk, therefore we couldn't find out their opinion. Nevertheless, the above mentioned gave a relatively comprehensive picture of the situation.

Islamia Colony

Needs

1. It seem that as majority of people own small and large scale businesses so loan facilities can be helpful for them
2. Low cost schools and adult literacy center is also the need of the area.
3. For women, educational and vocational centres are recommended, but strictly female managed

Survey Findings

Fifty percent of the houses are owned by Afghans, which has estimated values of Rs. 40 million to Rs. 50 million. An 80 yards single story house costs Rs. 0.2 million to Rs. 0.35 million, 120 yards cost 0.4 to 0.5 million and 300 to 400 yards cost Rs. 0.7 million to Rs. 10 million. These Afghans owns houses for all of the configurations stated above.

In Islamia colony they have the occupation of small grocery stories. They are also involved in garment business outsides their locality. These people also deal in second hand clothes and some are involved in earth works. Afghans in the area are running three Madressah School and do not run or own any Private School, however their children go to nearby private schools.

A shopkeeper told that he is running the shop since 5 years, which caters to the needs of neighbourhood. He usually buys items from *Joria Bazar* and some of the items are provided by the salesperson of various companies. He was of the opinion that if he gets some money he can earn more by investing that in the shop. His monthly turnover is from 4000 to 6000 rupees.

A youth in teen opined that he got education in a Madressah and didn't get any formal education. But his aspiration is to have more religious education. His favourite pass time is playing cricket. He wanted to be a technician of TV and Radio.

The Moulvi in Islamia Colony stated that controlled and limited English medium is acceptable because excessive conventional education is harmful as it turned the mind of the people. The girls should get religious education only because if they will study in English medium they will be exposed. He said that if people would follow the Islamic code of life than all the vices and evils will be removed automatically.

A businessman has his business in Bacha Khan Chowk where he sells shoes. He is running it since 10 to 12 years and 2000 to 4000 per month. He expressed that if he could get some extra money then he would increase his stock.

Muslimabad

Needs

1. Methods to increase the mobility of salesmen is a need of the area
2. Low interest loans for shopkeepers are also required
3. Primary and secondary schools with a blend of religious education were also identified as one of the needs
4. Youth needs computer and English language centres

Survey Findings

In Muslimabad the Afghans own 40 percent of the houses out of 1100 or 1200 houses. The value of property is relatively less here therefore an 80 yards plot can be obtained in Rs. 0.1 million, 120 yards plot in 0.14 million and 500 yards plot in 0.45 million to 0.55. The cost of constructed houses as reported by the local people is Rs. 0.16 million single stories on 80 yards, Rs. 0.25 million for 120 square yards Rs. 0.5 to 0.7 million of 500 sq. yards.

The major occupation of the Afghans living in the area is selling of garments, vegetables and other small items through carts (cart vendors). The unemployment rate is relatively high here.

Since the government school is relatively far from the area so these Afghans do not send their children to school. Only 1 percent goes to nearby private schools. There are two Madressah schools in the area but they have little capacity to accommodate all the children of school going age.

One cart vendor said that he sells chocolate and other items of children's interest on cart. Through hard work he is able to get daily sales turn over of Rs. 800 to Rs. 1000 and profit of Rs. 200 to Rs. 250. He said that if he could invest more on cost and items he would be able to earn more. He migrated from Afghanistan due to economic reasons.

A young man of 19 or 20 years of age mentioned that he was formally educated up to 6th class, has completed the "Quran" in Madressah School. He expressed the desire of continuation of formal education. He also emphasised on the importance of English medium education as rests of the folks are getting it. He plays cricket in spare time and roam on the streets with fellows. He aspired to be a motor mechanic.

The Moulvi expressed that the religious education should not be blended with conventional worldly education (worldly refers to prevalent system of education). The two could be obtained separately and there is no harm in having conventional education. The girls should also get education but it is better to have separate female managed schools for them. In response to a question he said that the elected candidates are responsible for bringing betterment to the area.

A businessman mentioned that his business venue is *Qasba Colony*, where he supplies items to retail outlets/ shops. He is in the business since 17 to 18 years. He mentioned that his monthly sales turn over is Rs. 0.1 million to Rs. 0.15 million. He mentioned that he doesn't need more money as to manage the present scale of business is sufficient for him.

MPR Colony

Needs

1. Direct linkages of electronic item dealers with main market players for franchise facilities are suggested
2. The schools need teacher training centres and training in quality management of schools
3. Computer centres can operate effectively
4. Adult literacy centres may function here
5. English language Centre are also suggested

Survey Findings

The Afghan settlers own Twenty five percent of approximately 3000 houses. They have an approximate investment of Rs. 0.3 to 0.35 million, amounting to even Rs. 3 crore. And 120 sq. yard ranges from 0.45 million to Rs. 0.5 million. The 400 sq. yard plot costs Rs. 0.8 million to Rs. 1 million. The constructed houses depending on the construction and plot size range from Rs. 0.5 million to Rs. 3.5 millions. This area is known as "The Defence" of Afghans and most of the settlers here are in the business of garments (both local and foreign made) and smuggled goods. There are 10 Madressahs in the area (Madressah refers to religious schools) out of which six are run by Afghans. There are three English Medium schools in the area and are run by Pakistani Nationals. Afghani Children study there but girl students are very few.

A shopkeeper mentioned that he is in the business of selling electronic items on instalments since 12 years. He sells both local electronic items and also branded

items. The branded items are provided by the company representatives while the foreign made equipment are provided by an **x-person??**. His monthly-accumulated amount of instalment is from Rs. 70000 to Rs. 100000 and his profit is from Rs. 15000 to 20000. He mentioned that he wants to purchase a motorcycle so that he can sell more items and can increase his outreach.

A young man of 25 years total mentioned that he studied in Ship Owner College and now he is doing graduation. Though he has completed Quran but he is more interested in English medium education. His pass time activities include book reading and surfing on net. His aspirations include excellence in computer education.

The Moulvi accepted the importance of English medium “worldly” education but he was concerned about its utility and in his opinion the two should remain separated. He was also willing to initiate the scientific education in Madressah, and was also in favour of girl’s education and opined that it would help to improve the environment at homes.

Another businessman makes and sell locally made soaps in *Katchi Abadis*. He is in the mentioned business since the last 15 years. He earned Rs. 25000 to Rs. 50000 from the business in a month and he aspired to obtain Suzuki Pickup so that his outreach could increase.

Hasan Nauman Colony

Needs

1. Primary level schools are needed
2. Adult literacy centers will function
3. Urdu and English language centers may work
4. Income generating opportunities are the dire need of the area

Survey Findings

According to the information collected by interviewing and site seeing the literacy rate in the area is 2 to 3 percent and most of the children are not getting education, instead they are employed. Only children of businessmen study and they are getting both religious and scientific education. There are three Madressah, but no English medium school in the area. In Indus flats there is one Afghan Primary School. There is no set up for non-formal education.

There are many private clinics in the area. People are responsive to health campaigns like Drive against Polio. The commonly prevailing diseases are Malaria, Diarrhea, Influenza and other skin diseases

Afghanis are permanent residents of the area and most of them are Identity card holders.

They are fond of eating meat and therefore are common patients of abdominal disorders. Due to improper hygiene and sanitation, women and children fall ill with greater frequency than men do.

There are 1000 to 1200 houses in the locality, with no potable water facility. People, on the average, usually spend Rs. 400 per month for potable water.

There is no NGO working in the area. Children are involved in scavenging, aimless wandering. Women are mostly involved in domestic chores. Men sell garments in weekly bazaars and are involved in carpet weaving. Some of them have departed for Dubai

Sohrab Goth Flats

Needs

1. Vocational centers for women are suggested
2. English language centers are required

3. Computer centers are also suggested

Survey Findings²

Though they are well connected with market but the love for rural atmosphere is evident. The flocks are kept locked up inside some of the flats of the Afghan refugees while in the main bazaar slaughtered and skinned sheep can be seen all around. The Afghans began shifting to the apartment complex three years back and have succeeded in changing the urban housing complex into a tribal environment.

The Al-Asif scheme provided respite to the lower income families of Karachi, who before the establishment of the complex lived in congested, unhygienic conditions.

The police officials are busy in collecting monthly grants from these butchers and shopkeepers. Sheep and goats are being slaughtered on all the seven days of the week.

They have come here with their fighter mentality. Though now they are in the most civilised city of Pakistan, they are uncertain and restless because of their old enmities. The enmities seem to have been aggravated during the war. This has made them all quite aggressive.

The Afghans never go to the police stations for resolving their complaints. They don't tell their actual names even to doctors lest their identity is disclosed and their foes that may also have come to Karachi locate them.

Swarms of flies welcome the casual visitor walking through muddy streets and the lack of a sewerage system adds to the stench of meat in the air. Health care and basic amenities are missing in the entire flat complex, consisting of 1700

² Observations and clipping's review

flats, the blocks are named from A to Q and each block has hundred homes. The ground floor flats in all of them have been converted in to commercial shops, hotels and slaughterhouses.

Just a few years back no one was willing to pay Rs. 40,000 for a shop but the price have sky rocketed since then and now the value of a shop ranges from Rs. 5 lacks to 8 lacks. Simultaneously rent of flat was only Rs. Five hundred and now people are ready to give Rs. 2500 for the same flat.

Because of the Afghan presence the local police station called Gulzar-i-Hijri gets Rs. 0.9 million to 1.4 million per month only from the Al-Asif square mainly from the Afghans shop-keepers and it is now the fourth most sought after posting of any station House Officer. SHOs offers up to Rs. 5 million to their counterparts for resisting transfer to this station. The SHO can earn many times this amount within a year.

Nusrat Bhutto Colony

Needs

1. Income generating opportunities are the dire need of the area
2. Technical skill centers are needed
3. English language teaching center is also suggested

Survey Findings

The spread of Nusrat Bhutto colony is 15 acres and Afghans own three hundred houses. A plot of 80 yards costs Rs. 65000 while 120 square yards costs Rs. 90000. A single house on a plot of 80 square yards costs Rs. 150000 and a plot of 120 yards costs Rs. 250000. They are involved in, selling of electronic goods and earth works.

A shopkeeper who is in the business of selling electronic items on instalments mentioned that he procures equipment from electronic market, M.A. Jinnah Road

and earns Rs. 500 to 700 per month. He opined with utmost certainty that he don't want to go back to Afghanistan and if at all he had to live there then he would resort to farming.

A young man of 22 years of age mentioned that he is interested in learning new skills and at present he spends time in learning computer and gaining technical knowledge of various things. He has studied from English medium schools.

The Maulvi opined that there is no harm in having the two type of education but girls should be restricted to religious education only. World could be a better place if Islam and system proposed by God could prevail.

Machhar Colony

Needs

1. Soft loans are required by the shop owners

Survey Findings

The colony is spread on an area of 45 acres. Some 250 houses are owned by Afghans. A plot on 80 square yards costs from Rs. 60,000 to 80000. A house costs from Rs. 250000 to 300000. The Afghans living there are involved in the selling of garments, shoes, scavenging and in running hotels.

The shopkeeper told that he is selling grocery items since 1982 and has per month income of Rs. 5000. If he can get some soft loan then he would be able to augment his business. He also expressed that he doesn't want to go back to Afghanistan.

A young man of twenty years maintained that he has obtained religious education and then obtained military training for Jihad purpose. His favourite pastime is to read books on religion and he wants to learn the skill of arms manufacturing.

Maulvi was in the favour of English education but he was of the opinion that if a local Muslim could help in the task then it is a welcomed phenomenon otherwise he could not render any help. He was also of the opinion that there should be no education for girls except religious. He thought that a good Muslim should practice charity and if one could by boycott foreign made goods then the world around would be in a better shape.

The businessman earns Rs. 10000 per month by selling shoes in lighthouse. He is in the business since 1987 and he mentioned that if he could get more money he will invest that too in business.

Lahore

The areas visited in Lahore City are as follows:

1. Bhaikwal Pind
2. Ali Mohallah, Johar Town
3. Khan Colony
4. Shafiqabad
5. Shahdra (Millat Park)

The interviews and discussions were conducted with the following

1. Watchmen
2. Dally wage earners
3. Milk vendors
4. Housewives
5. Shopkeepers
6. Tailor master
7. Youth
8. Saleswomen
9. Cart Sellers
10. Local Counsellor

The cumulative findings and inferences from the information gathered are as follows:

Population

The total population of Afghan Urban settlers / Refugees in Lahore is unknown.

The reasons figured out for this lack of estimation are as follows:

1. These people migrated from Afghanistan to Lahore in various time periods, some migrated after the downfall of Sardar Dawood, then in communist regime. They also migrated after Najibullah regime when the sanctions were imposed by America on Afghanistan due to Osama Bin Laden.

2. The males travel frequently to and from Afghanistan and often move with families.
3. If they are living on rent, they often change their place within city.
4. Majority of them has valid Pakistani identity cards and passports therefore they cannot be distinguished.
5. Their younger generation is well versed with Punjabi language and culture therefore one cannot identify them.
6. After September 11, 2001, it was reliably learnt that, the relevant police stations estimated the population of Afghans within their respective jurisdictions. It can be an authentic source of information with certain degree of variance but access to the information is an uphill task.
7. The district census reports do not account for within district migration. Also they do not take Afghans as different nationals.

Patterns of obtaining shelters by the refugees

In Lahore, host community, is Punjabi. These refugees live within the host community in rented homes, in already settled establishment, as researchers observed the phenomenon in Bhaikwal. These refugees also obtain land or occupy state land, get it leased and construct their houses on it. Some cases are observed in which a local landlord just to get the land secure and populated provides them shelter. The love for rural atmosphere is common in all of these Afghans.

The above three patterns give birth to the entirely different dynamic of relationship with the host community. In the first and third type they feel insecure and are open towards the host community. They have got friendly relationship with their landlords and with the neighbourhood. Children have friendship on equal term with other Punjabi children. They play and enjoy together on street.

Where they have their own secluded settlements and if they are in majority, the Afghans create an environment of mini Afghanistan. They have preserved their

identity and prefer Persian, Dari or Pashto as means of communication. They are less open towards outsiders in such localities.

Perception of host community

The host community perceives these refugees as organised and hardworking group of people. They are convinced of their entrepreneurial skills, salesmanship and negotiation power. They also appreciate unity in Afghan community.

Besides the above-mentioned positives, the host community also held them responsible for increase in crime rate. They also grant them drug addicts and arms smugglers. They are perceived as well armed, unforgiving and traders of girls in the name of marriage.

Local community is also worried about the fact that as a bonafide Pakistani National as per documents, they will not go back to their country even if peace is restored and reconstruction and rehabilitation starts in Afghanistan

They also caused a decrease in the amount of dihari (daily wage) in Lahore city and increased the rent of the houses in various localities. In low-income areas they are also accused of creating pollution problems as they are involved in scavenging and incineration of sold waste.

It was also expressed that since Afghan girls are fair in complexion and are charming therefore Punjabi youth is attracted more towards them creating shortage of potential male proposals for the Punjabi girls.

Spread of some specific disease like AIDS is also attributed to the Afghan refugees.

Arrival in the City

After crossing the porous 1200-km long Pak Afghan border, due to push and pull factors, they made their inroads to the major cities like Lahore. Initially they stay with their already settled acquaintances and tribesmen and then move forward for employment and settlement. They obtained forged documents by paying bribes to the corrupt officials. Sometimes this is done under the patronage of influentials also. Since they are very down to earth, they do not need hi-fi facility for settling down.

Occupations and Needs

As stated earlier that these Refugees are good entrepreneurs, so they are less in corporate sector jobs except watchman, hotels or informal sector. The Government sector is totally devoid of them. They earn livelihood the hard way. They usually sell electronic items, clothes, and leather goods either on streets or on a rented or owned shop. They also sell dates, *Moong Phali* and corn on carts. Some of them are also Tandoor owners. The poorest of the poor are involved in scavenging and earn Rs 50 to 70 per day by selling discarded items. This is the segment, which is most hit by official holidays and strikes in the city.

The rich Afghans own retail outlets in big shopping centers like Ortega and Liberty where most of them sell clothes. Their income cannot be estimated. The local Punjabis are willing to provide shops to Afghans in the shopping centers because they are good salesmen and through their hard work cause to increase the market value of the shopping centers. This phenomenon has other social repercussions too.

In most of the cases refugees do not allow women to work outside the house. These are involved mostly in domestic chores like food making, cleaning and taking care of livestock, if any. Two issues seem to force them not to work, first is the orthodox culture which doesn't allow them to move freely outside their

houses particularly young girls. Secondly the number of children are so many that she cannot spare time to go to work.

Some educated and liberal male Afghans do realize the importance of working partners but they do not get respectable jobs for their females. Often childcare takes priority over economic benefit.

Few Afghan women get job of preparing and cleaning dry fruits in the outskirts of Lahore. This work they performed in their homes and they pay transportation charges out of their pockets. This is happening in relatively old settlements where they have their own houses, speak Punjabi to a reasonably good extent and have develop contacts over a period of time.

Other occupations in which the refugees are involved are transport, boot polishing, cane handling in sugar industries, earth works and stones crashing. It seems that due to poverty their children have contributed much to already existent child labor in the city.

Education and Needs

Majority of the migrated Afghan refugees is not educated but the situation is gradually becoming different in the new generation. Still most of the young Afghans are not concentrating on education due to the following reasons.

1. They cannot afford the cost of education as far as fee structure of private schools is concerned.
2. They consider work and business to be more lucrative than education.
3. Due to continued displacement from one part to another, within city, they are unable to continue with the education of their children

Getting females educated is a taboo. Though females themselves and mother of the household is interested in getting education, their males strictly prohibit them. They are allowed to study only in Madressah before 8 or 10 years of age.

The situation is getting different in youth and Farsi Ban Afghans who consider education in females as a necessary evil but with a blend of religious education.

It appears that low cost primary education is a dire need of children. The Pashto speaking areas like Khan Colony needs secluded centres for boys and girls, while in areas like Bhaikwal a co-education institute will run smoothly.

Marriages

These refugees prefer to marry within their respective tribes. The groom's family offers huge amount to the bride's family and if it is acceptable then the marriage deal takes place. The consent of girls is not on agenda and she is supposed to follow the will and decision of the parents. The girl and boy are termed as "Dana" in local language and the girl's age and charm determine the price of "Dana" as stated earlier. That's one reason why refugees are much protective about their young unmarried girls as they are a source of income to them. Males are in habit of having more than one wife.

But somehow a slow shift in trend is observable. The intermingling of the two communities' i.e. Punjabi and Afghans is giving birth to marriages based on love and businesslike. The poor Afghans are interested in money and if some Punjabi speaking is ready to pay them more price of Dana then they are willing to marry the girl. Some cases also came into light where the odd couples flee away from their residing place. The young Afghan boys are also willing to marry Punjabi girl for the reason that she could help settle them and would bring prosperity to their otherwise struggling and uncertain life.

Going back home

The idea of going back to Afghanistan for these refugees is not very acceptable phenomenon. The factors and reasons are as follows:

1. As the economy of their homeland is in ruins they do not have a valid reason to go back
2. As warlords rule their motherland, they need a guarantee for security of their lives.
3. The host country is offering economic opportunities to majority of them.
4. Due to corrupt administration of host country they can always get their fake but valid documents made. They leave for Gulf states; European countries and America on the basis of these documents.
5. The Pashtoon Nationalism is the strongest common thread for the survival in big cities of like Lahore, Karachi, Peshawar, Islamabad and Pindi.

The elder generation, since were born in Afghanistan and feels nostalgic about their homeland, wants to go back. Women and young generation does not want to go particularly those who were born here in Lahore. The natural integration of the two communities can be observed in older settlements where the youngster of the two communities shares the same interest.

So the voluntary going back is possible with the political and economic stability of the Afghans and the trust on the sustenance of that stability as many have bitter experiences with successive governments in Kabul.

Those who were well off and educated (up to their standards) and own land in Afghanistan will definitely go back as they miss all the quality of life they were enjoying out there. After migration they have to work eighteen hours a day and hardly make their both ends meet. It is a foreseeable phenomenon that these families will split in case they have to go back. Few will go and most of them will not.

Conclusions

To assess the existing educational and skill needs of the Urban Afghan settlers and also to know what their needs would be if they have to return back to their motherland, construction of a total picture is mandatory. The total picture should essentially encompass the reasons for migration, the patterns of settlement, conducive factors for rehabilitation in motherland, extent of social and economic integration in Pakistani society and aspirations of various segments of settlers. With the help of field visits, individual interviews, group discussions and the information available through print and electronic media, the following key points encapsulate the major aspects of our interest. First the needs are narrated, since it is the prime objective, then an elaboration on the aura that encompasses the needs.

Skill Needs

These Afghan Settlers are die-hard entrepreneurs and prefer business, irrespective of scale, to job. Their ability to work hard ties them with private as well as to informal sector of the economy. The Afghan businessmen are contributing a significant share to Pakistan's GDP.

They sell garments in shopping plazas in weekly bazaars and in the streets. They also sell cosmetics, wall clocks, carpets, proving themselves as excellent mobile salesmen. They are also in transport business. They also crush stone on contract and provide labour for earth works on contract. Due to the cheap labour charges and their ability to work hard, they are preferred over local laborers. The poorest segment, especially those who migrated in Taliban period are involved in scavenging and in Karachi alone some 20,000 Afghans are involved in this business. The recycling industry provides employment to some 55,000 families of Karachi and has an annual turnover of Rs. 1.2 billion.

The needs as identified after survey are:

- Small loans for increase investments
- Vehicle to increase outreach of the saleable items
- Skilled training in earth works
- Equipment for earth works
- Provision of relevant equipment
- Direct contact with the major players of the market

Though women are skilled in stitching and weaving but their major occupation is related to domestic chores, child bearing and rearing. The migrant population does not get the jobs of the same status they were enjoying in their motherland. A female schoolteacher in Kabul hardly finds a teaching job for her here in the local job market. That's one reason for Afghan women not in white-collar jobs, another is lack of knowledge of English language. Due to large number of children they hardly get time for themselves and due to the concept of *Ghairat* they are not allowed to work in the outside world. This statement suits well to Afghans who are Pashto speaking and live in colonies as in Muslimabad, Karachi and in Khan Colony, Lahore. But Afghans of other origins exhibit more openness towards the concept of working women.

The Afghan youth showed interest in other than above-mentioned occupations. Computer literacy and programming, training in automobile maintenance and repair and technical expertise in other electronic items are their major areas of interest. That's the reason computer centers are functioning successfully at Sohrab Goth. Women-only vocational centers seems to be a dire need of Afghan women and young girls.

On the other side of the coin also stands the fact that most refugees find their professional training irrelevant in Pakistan. However, like refugees and migrants elsewhere, refugees in Pakistan take up jobs that no one else is willing to do;

they are forced to accept lower wages for the same work; they take risks and work hard to survive.

Educational Needs

Religious education is a top most priority. For boys age is not a bar, but for girls they have to discontinue it, as soon they grow young. The phenomenon is prevalent in Pashto-speaking Afghans but exceptions are there. In others the restrictions are not so serious, rather they prefer to educate their women. The youth (both girls and boys) of all ethnic groups aspires for education and knows the importance of education. We came across young girls both at Sohrab Goth who are studying in schools and in Lahore who are graduate. We can conclude by saying that if facilities are available than the migrants will get their siblings educated. Young boys are also interested in technical education and computer programming and two centers are running at Sohrab Goth that primarily cater to the needs of young Afghans. It is true for the learning of English language.

We can summarize our findings vis-à-vis education as:

- The migrants realize the need of education
- Their realization is based on the needs of the market, hence are market driven
- They mostly rely on low-cost primary schools or government institutions for the education of their dependents
- The first generation migrants are busy in settling themselves while the younger generation is more upwardly mobile and hence needs formal education
- In some areas it is a trend that religious education should be a part and parcel of whatever other type of education
- The importance of education is less prevalent in affluent Afghans.
- The needs are area specific but exist for every level, right from primary education to adult literacy education.
- Extreme dearth for higher and specialized education centers is observed in the areas visited.

- In some areas women-only centers can fulfill the objective of girl's education
- The most important factor before taking any initiative is to consult with the elders (*Jirga*) of the area.
- The educational needs of scavengers are uncertain because they are busy day and night to earn livelihood which provides them bare minimum sustenance

Aura

The context and the pretext of the needs is as follows:

1. On April 28, 1978, Mr. Noor Mohd Tarahki of Peoples Democratic Front (PDF) with the help of intellectuals, army officers and other party comrades overthrew Sardar Dawood's regime in Afghanistan. On September 17, 1979 Mr. Hafeezullah Ameen through a revolt (as he belongs to Khalq faction of the PDF) killed Mr. Tarahki and became President of Afghanistan. It was first time in his regime that some 0.2 million Afghans crossed the border in the capacity of 'refugees'. They were forced to flee because of tyrant policies and practices of Mr. Ameen. Before that frequent travelling of "Pawandas" and "Koochis" across the border took place. Their travelling was often initiated due to hard weather, cultural and social reasons, and at times, drought.
2. On December 25, 1979, Mr. Babrak Karmal took over as President of Afghanistan and he also pooled Russian troops to defend the revolution. Though he was considered moderate but the advent of Russian troupes was considered a major threat by the Western governments. Iranian people, in February 1979, after a long struggle, deprived USA from one of its' loyal friend in the region. The two factors combined and after converting Pakistan into a frontline state, the USA and its allies started intruding in the internal affairs of Afghanistan. The intrusion ranged from humanitarian aid for the effectees of revolution to the military training for the dissidents of revolution. Eventually all the 24 provinces of the unfortunate country were converted into

battleground giving birth to the phenomenon of mass exodus towards Iran and Pakistan.

3. Push and Pull factors were operative behind the exodus. The refugees could be termed as war refugees as well as economic refugees. They crossed the country through 1200-kilometer porous border, and if sighted by the government official, were allowed to cross the Durand line by paying as low as Rs. 150 per person. There may be more but atleast 15 passes and grooves identified by an agency that suits the purpose of migrants.
4. According to Government of Pakistan's statistics, there were 0.2 million Afghan refugees in January 1980. The number increased at the rate of 0.2 million per month and in 1982 there were 2.5 million refugees in the country. By 1985 the figure went up to 3 million, which according to Government sources was 20 percent of the total population of Afghanistan. In post Najibullah's period, due to stringent Islamic policies of Taliban many urban Afghans migrated to Pakistan. The strict gestures of Taliban towards certain segments of the society and for some skills made hard for the urbanities to earn their livelihoods and to move with a decent freedom in society
5. Though initially they were restricted to prescribed camps in NWFP and Balochistan but due to the demands of life and also due to the well placed support structure based on historic, ethnic and cultural relationships with Pashtun, they soon got out of the camps in search of a better life. The withdrawal of aid agencies in mid nineties also played an important role in pushing them out from the camps and moving towards major cities which hold relatively better prospects for them.
6. If history is a guide, the local population in the long run will assimilate majority of Afghan refugees. Lodhis, Afridis, Sherwanis, Durranis came here either as part of the invading armies or as refugees from their enemies, becoming

permanent residents through marriage, administrative acumen, and technological prowess of valor. It will be short sightedness, as such to exclude these migrants from macro-picture of Pakistan's demography. Technically they might be outsiders, but pragmatically, they are partners in Pakistan's bounties and losses, bound in a symbolic relationship.

7. Migrants always played a major role in determining the history of urban areas and that migration is a major fact of our lives, but it always results in higher rates of urbanization. Majority of displaced persons from India in 1947 – 48 were from rural areas but they settled down in the cities. It was a chance to get into urban, areas, with their traditional lure that drove refugees to the cities and their periphery.
8. A school of thought argues that our social infrastructure is already inadequate. Our health, education, transports and housing sectors will have to accommodate a large number of old, young and overwhelming female Afghan population. The other argues that they are benefiting GDP of the country by involving themselves in the trade and commerce of the host country.
9. Nevertheless, the need is to broaden our population policies and plans to accommodate changes that are taking place in the world at an unprecedented pace. We should bring population to the center stage of development. After all these are the people who are at the beginning and the end of the development process.
10. There are no exact population estimates of Afghan population in urban centres for the reasons mentioned before. Nevertheless, it is estimated that more than 0.5 million Afghans are residing in Karachi, where as Lahore is home to some 0.15 million Afghans. It is estimated that some 0.8 million have crossed the border after September 11, 2001, & most of them will converge to

major urban centers. Hasan Nauman Colony at Sohrab Goth is already evincing the fact. The ethnic mix of migrant population is Pashto, Tajik, Uzbek and Hazarajat.

11. Their homes are tenaciously adhering to their age-old tribal way of life. A flock of sheep or other livestock lives side by side. The phenomenon is observable in almost every locality and they have succeeded in changing the urban housing complex into a rustic, tribal environment.
12. After paying bribery to the corrupt officials or their minions they usually obtain fake documents which prove them as bonafide Pakistani National. Identity cards are made in an amount ranging from Rs. 300 to Rs. 1200. The fee for passport is Rs. 5000. The Pashto Speaking Afghans get it done cheaply and easily, while Tajik, Uzbek and Hazarajat find it more difficult since their features and language is quite different.
13. Due to the difference in host communities the phenomenon of social integration of these Afghans acquired a different pace in Karachi and Lahore. In Lahore these settlers are adopting themselves more to the host rapidly, especially youth and children. The youth is more intertwined in the social fabric of Lahore as compared to elder population. In Karachi since the host communities are local Pashtun these Afghan settlers are successful in preserving their identity and rituals. Moreover in some settlements due to similar political interests they got support from political and religio-political parties which serving to other interests helped them in preserving their identities. In Lahore the settlers have an apolitical attitude and at places preservation of identity has become a critical problem.
14. First resistance and then protracted factional war has destroyed the social institutions too: most effected, perhaps, being that of marriage. The Afghans, right from the beginning belong to different creeds, which led them to identify

themselves in ethno-linguistic terms. These tribes have different norms, customs and traditions. Marriages among different tribes are not encouraged and instance of inter-marriages between Pushtuns and Uzbeks, and Tajiks and Hazaras are rare. When the refugees left their homeland, families scattered as the socio-political limitations forced them to different countries around the globe.

15. Now refugees' families are suffering from a new dilemma. They cannot easily find suitable life partners from their own tribe, nor can they marry their girls with boys belonging to other ethnic groups due to the centuries old taboos. They also find great difficulty in approaching and choosing a life-partner from members of the same family tribe or ethnic group living in another country due to their inability to meet the complicated immigration requirements. They can neither alter their old social customs, nor can they amend the international immigration laws. There seems to be no way out. However in some cases the young Afghans want to select spouses from the host community. Inter and intra ethnic love marriages are also reported in the two urban centers.

16. A raging debate is in vogue as to whether these refugees will return to their homes or they will settle down here legally or deceitfully. Since it is a tricky issue, the rehabilitation issue in motherland needs discussion. The real reason why most Afghan refugees don't want to go back to Afghanistan is purely economic because war-ravaged Afghanistan with its destroyed economy can no longer feed and sustain its people. Those who have opted to stay back in Afghanistan are mostly living off the land, are too poor to leave, have a stake in the existing system of government, or have relations who work in Pakistan, the Gulf States or the Western countries. They regularly remit rupees, rials and dollars. Afghans living as refugees in Pakistan earn much more than they can hope to make in Afghanistan. They are also happy to be paid in Pakistani Rupee, which is a far stronger currency than the

worthless Afghani. Many Afghan families have found it practicable and profitable to maintain two homes, one in Pakistan to make some extra money and another back home in Afghanistan to take care of agricultural and other seasonal chores. They latter are, in fact, economic refugees who are unwilling to forego the better standard of life in Pakistan.

17. This doesn't mean that all Afghan refugees are here for economic gains. There are quite a few who fought the Taliban or still actively oppose them and cannot risk their lives by returning to Afghanistan. Some of the Afghan refugees want to educate their young daughters and sisters, which they cannot do in Afghanistan, and also wish to impart quality education to their sons and brothers. Though small, there is also a class of urban Afghans who cannot accept the Taliban orders that men must grow beards and women ought to wear the *Hijab*. Many such Afghans come to Pakistan to try and seek refuge somewhere in the west. A number of them have succeeded in their cause.
18. Keeping in mind that the trend towards education is taking roots the well-meaning Afghans believe it would be a big loss for a war-devastated country such as Afghanistan to lose some of its brightest young people. Unlike their brethren in Afghanistan, Afghan refugee children are comparatively speaking more educated and skilled because they benefited from Pakistan's more developed educational system and professional and business life. If they are able to win Pakistani citizenship, Afghans may not repatriate primarily for economic reasons. Having suffered the worst brain drain in the world, Afghanistan would suffer irreparably if it were to lose a significant number of its better-educated largely urbanized young men and women to Pakistan.
19. Source suggests that if peace prevails in the motherland and offers economic prospects even then, only for logistical reasons the complete repatriation of Afghans refugees living in Pakistan will take over 20 years as the government

is short of required funds and logistic facilities to complete this uphill. During the winter, they cannot continue owing to bad weather in Afghanistan.

20. Before September 11, 2001, the government itself was confused over the repatriation issue. On the one hand it made tall claims of sending them back to their country and, on the other hand it wants to retain artisans among them to run the leather and carpet industry by employing them. The government has established two carpet villages for the purpose.

21. The reason for their involvement in crimes varies from joblessness to the patronage of their crimes by the influential. If on the one hand the big criminals have been patronising the Afghan refugees criminals on the other majority of the Afghan criminals have lethal arms permits. The police, in such a situation are helpless to nab these officially pet criminals. At the most the police could do it is extortion of money from small Afghan criminal, the influential come to rescue him and majority of those who are criminals or the hired assassins roam free because of influential's backing. The Afghan criminal groups are also involved in competition for crimes and mostly different criminal groups normally get involve themselves in pitched battles for drug smuggling or arms trade.

22. Sources also suggest that the Afghans are deeply involved in 'guns for hire' service through which they rent out weapons to any interested party on a fixed daily base rate.

23. The visit of some areas suggest that they are sticking to orthodoxy, but the observation of the following three factors challenged this hypothesis and suggests that orthodoxy may have nuisance value but it is not rooted in masses:

- They are involved in *Soodi* (interest) business which in its core is un-Islamic

- A few years back they were running some cinema houses in Al-Asif Square that showed pornographic movies.
- They often trade daughters in the name of marriage

24. Besides above there is more about refugees. Sources estimate that for every well-to-do refugee, there are ten invisible malnourished refugee women and children. Sometimes they lack money to buy a shroud for a child who dies due to lack of medicines. Or the numerous women-headed households that does not have an adult male member because he is either dead, fighting in Afghanistan or working in Russia or Germany. These women feel insecure because they cannot get jobs to earn a livelihood, they face harassment on the streets and in offices, and they live in cramped crowded conditions, often without legal documents as no effective government exists in Kabul.

25. Many refugees also complain that rents are extremely high; landlords threaten eviction if they do not increase rents regularly. Sometimes they pay to live in under-construction houses, one room to a family. Those who live in shacks under bridges or near railway lines or in open spaces without water and other amenities also pay rent to the local policeman or owner of the plot. Or take the example of a typical refugee family- a mother with small children for whom she has to procure food. In the past she acquired it through the camp's headman, but now she is at a total loss; sometimes she is compelled to accept domestic work, although she was trained to be a schoolteacher.

26. Refugees' problems are created due to the consequences of specific and disastrous state policies. Therefore, public policies should be scrutinized carefully before we blame individuals for all our troubles.

27. Very few of those who were interviewed responded the question about the ways and means of earning livelihood once back to motherland. Most of them are unclear about their options of earning livelihood in case of

rehabilitation in Afghanistan. Majority of those very few answers suggests that they would resort to farming and in few cases to their formerly practiced professions. One reason for not providing the profound answer is the uncertainty associated with the phenomenon of going back.

28. It can be concluded safely that these Afghans as a group of migrants are marching with forces that are responsible to leap history forward. Any progressive initiative will work though it may experience some initial resistance or teething problems.