

Higher Education Concerns for Young Afghan Refugees in Delhi

By

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Nation, refugee and education are conflicting scenarios which may or may not present a case of juxtaposition. Nation, when not competent, obstructs the identities of the people on the move, giving them the title of refugee. As per the United Nations, a refugee is one who, as a result of events that occurred before January 1, 1951, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or unwilling to take advantage of that country's protection because of his well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion; or who does not have a nationality and is outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events.¹ Refugees are under constant threat of identity and this leads to their marginalisation which may impact their future. This can be in particular stressful and disruptive for the youth who are on the move. Refugee youth group holds the largest potential and possesses significant demographic dividends which, when channelled properly, can become a driving force behind a country's growth indices.² Further, it was elaborated that youth needs education to channelise their energy so that they are able to change their situation, improve their living index and thus can prove themselves beneficial for the residing state.

Higher education plays a critical role in the information economy, which is growing as a result of the acquisition of advanced skills and knowledge. It has largely been understood that the most significant path to growth and poverty reduction is higher education.³ The function of education is to build up human capital and human growth. As training supports the achievement of higher education and fosters a specific set of fundamental learning outcomes, it becomes basic to other abilities.⁴ There is a primary limitation in achieving this knowledge, education or skill aspect as a refugee. The goal of this article is to look into the difficulties faced by refugee students

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who have moved to India from Afghanistan and who are pursuing higher education. As the government has concerns for its own citizens, it has made certain areas of governance skewed and non-discriminatory;⁵ as a result, the difficulties of Afghan refugees are not reflected effectively. It is critical to concentrate on the concerns of Afghan refugees and understand them from their standpoint.

There are about 10,000 Afghan refugees in Delhi, 90 per cent of whom belong to Hindu or Sikh faiths, the religious minorities in Afghanistan; the remaining 10 per cent belong to Hazaras, Pashtun and other communities.⁶ In January 2020, there were 16,333 Afghan refugees and Afghan asylum seekers, as recorded.⁷ The quantity and area coverage of the Afghan refugee population in India, which they claim to be in thousands for years have been investigated.⁸ Ghosh explains the complexity of gauging the actual number as it might depend on the understanding of an individual's definition of the term 'refugee'. The subtleties of refugees' participation in higher education have been widely examined in the literature,⁹ but there has been little discussion about young Afghan refugees' accessibility to Indian higher education. Furthermore, as a refugee and their concerns have recently been a subject of debate due to many reasons, for example, apprehensions raised by the nation hosting refugees, the inadequacy of resources, rights not granted to refugees etc., it becomes necessary to investigate the issues that young Afghan refugee students face as they approach higher education. A refugee's decision to enrol in higher education is influenced by a number of factors that can discourage him/her at the time of application. This research attempts to provide significant insights into young Afghan refugees' higher education in Delhi by analysing:

- Why Delhi is a chosen destination for higher education
- The problems in accessing higher education in India
- The support mechanisms which may be available for Afghan refugee students

The nuances of higher education from the perspectives of Afghan refugees in India are explorative in nature. From December 2020 until the end of February 2021, focused interviews, using the snowball sampling method, were conducted with nine Afghan refugee students enrolled in both undergraduate and postgraduate courses, or in other courses in higher education institutes and residing in Delhi. All interviewees were accorded refugee status, by UNHCR and had the refugee ID card issued by UNHCR.

India and Refugees

A slew of international human rights treaties has been ratified by India. Despite this, it is not a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention or the 1967 Protocol on the Status of Refugees.¹⁰ As a result, it lacks a clear and independent law to govern refugees. The care and treatment of refugees in

India are governed by the Registration of Foreigners Act of 1939, the Foreigners Act of 1946 and the Foreigners Order of 1948. All current Indian laws including the Code of Criminal Procedure, the Indian Penal Code and the Indian Evidence Act apply to refugees.¹¹ In India, there are three categories of refugees. All Category I refugees are fully covered by the Indian government (for example, Tamil refugees from Sri Lanka). Category II refugees (for example, Afghan refugees) have been granted refugee status by the UNHCR and are protected under the "non-refoulement" principle (no refugee-providing state may in any way expulse or send a refugee back to the borders of nations where his or her life or freedom would be in danger due to their race, religion, nationality, membership in a specific social group, or political beliefs.). Category III refugees have arrived in India and have been accepted into the local community despite not being recognised by either the Indian government or the UNHCR (for example, the Chin refugees from Myanmar living in the state of Mizoram).¹² Refugee rights and entitlements are currently primarily determined by India's Constitution and the Foreigners Act of 1946. It is also worth noting that UNHCR is yet to sign a branch office agreement with the Indian government; UNHCR operates in India under the auspices of UNDP.¹³ India has signed and ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child, as well as its optional protocols, providing refugee children in the country access to basic rights, including the right to education. The Indian Right to Education Act of 2009 guarantees primary education to refugees and asylum seekers in India. As a result, elementary school education is provided free of charge to the Indian refugee community. When it comes to higher education, students, on the other hand, do not have many rights.

Delhi as a Preferred Destination

A major proportion of Afghan refugees is settled in Delhi or nearby places like Faridabad and Haryana. Delhi being the capital city has easy accessibility to resources (information about programmes, support of relatives, higher education scholarship, various support programmes etc); the urban sprawl includes the National Capital Region with more employment opportunities; the closer proximity to UNHCR which is established only in Delhi and is the only official organisation facilitating and being responsible for refugees.¹⁴ When interviews of young Afghan refugees were conducted in Delhi, it was found that the respondents migrated with their families to India, when their lives were at stake and they thought that India would be their safe haven. Every respondent had a different reason to move to Delhi. A few had no particular reason to move to India but decided on it being the only choice available. For some, the political and economic environment had appeased them to stay in Delhi.

Riyaz (pseudonym) explained that he chose Delhi as a destination because "it was my father's and my dream to pursue higher education in India so that I could get into Afghan administration after the completion of my studies." In fact, the Indian higher education system is highly valued by the refugees with a potent consideration for employment in the ministries of

Afghanistan. Employment in Afghanistan ministries is a fascination because not many other economic opportunities are available in Afghanistan. Ramia (pseudonym) expressed, "India, especially Delhi, provided business ties which in the past had been explored by my family members. In fact, my assumption is that Delhi being the capital city would be promising as are most capital cities compared to other ones." Delhi also appears to her to be the hub where more facilities are available.¹⁵ She thought that UNHCR is the sole point of connection to seek resettlement and to maintain that constant assurance, one needs to live near it. She further suggested that for most Afghan refugees it is the UNHCR that is regarded as its embassy rather than the Afghanistan Embassy.

Many respondents considered India to be a transit nation with Delhi as the centre of access to information from UNHCR. Two reasons can be outlined for considering Delhi more relevant as a space of transit rather than a destination.¹⁶ First, an in-between process is critical for some who have been constantly on the go since they cannot even imagine stopping.¹⁷ However, this in-between process sometimes causes certain experiences or shifts in their movement which may make their destination and starting point less prominent, lending more importance to the very event. So, it is the journey that holds more significance. Second, transit countries are geographically situated in such a way that they act as intermediary stations between the departure and destination locations.¹⁸ A transit country has certain traits:

- Exists between crossroads of a Global North and Global South
- Shares border with developed countries
- Has a high flow of migrants
- Offers the possibility for informal entry to a neighbouring country, yet has restrictive policies towards migrants

A transit country is unprepared to confront migrants and their needs and is approachable not only geographically but also socio-politically through policies that convert the Global South into a gate and bridge between the first and the third world. It is the capability to migrate which plays a crucial factor in the mobility of Afghans and transit migrants.¹⁹ Such capabilities act as catalyst for mobility between one's aspirations and failure to do so.²⁰ Although the character traits for mobility may not be same as one may have good and elaborative network in the country that one aspires to be in or may sell off the property or may have influential background to finance the journey,²¹ while, another might be indebted or exploited and abused in the journey, still others who might not be able to reach the destination due to lack of capital. There are also social networks which play a vital role even when one's family is not able to provide the economic capital needed; moreover, economic capital without the required knowledge to move will also not work in an individual's favour.²²

Concerns of Afghan Refugees

To understand the current issues of the young Afghan refugee community in higher education, we must first examine their earlier curriculum pattern. As a result, a modest attempt has been made to shed light on the subjects and curriculum pattern that students in Afghanistan have learnt in the past. The students' decision-making skills and access to higher education in the country where they have sought shelter are also impacted by the previous orientation of the curriculum and courses they have previously studied.

Subjects Studied in Afghanistan

Many students engaged in higher education in Afghanistan were forced to relocate to India since their lives were in danger. Therefore, education became a lesser concern to the refugees at that time; however, their unawareness of India's higher education impacts their application to universities. The stark difference being the structure and design of the education curriculum designed in Afghanistan. Education in Afghanistan is not organised into disciplines as in India; instead, 17 courses are taught from kindergarten through the twelfth grade every year. The Afghan system's unique feature is that in the twelfth standard students are taught science, technology, commerce and society all at the same time. Another notable feature, as mentioned by interviewees is that the Afghanistan Board of Education does not include economics as a subject in their curriculum. In Afghanistan, secondary education has two levels:

- First cycle or lower secondary, also known as *Maktabeh Motevaseteh*, is pursued for three years from age 12 to 14, i.e., from the seventh to the ninth grade.
- The second cycle or higher or senior secondary, also called *Doreyeh Aali*, extends for another three years and includes the tenth to twelfth grades i.e., from 15 to 17 years of age.

The curriculum from the seventh to ninth grades include subjects such as religious studies, local languages, mathematics, natural sciences, social studies, foreign languages (English, German, French and Russian) and physical education. Students who pass the ninth grade can continue their senior secondary education. During this stage, students may choose to pursue technical and vocational education rather than senior secondary education. The curriculum for higher secondary education includes all the subjects of lower secondary and a few more of natural science and social science subjects. In total, they study every year for three consecutive years, a combination of 17 to 18 subjects such as Islamic studies, agriculture, education, art and culture, mathematics or history. Thus, higher secondary education includes all the subjects and no specialisation is provided unlike in Indian higher secondary education. Seven out of nine respondents described the same pattern of school education in Afghanistan, as mentioned above. None of the

respondents pursued technical and vocational education programme, so no information could be collected regarding vocational and technical courses. After the completion of both higher secondary and technical and vocational education, a nation-wide entrance examination is being conducted known as Concours-KONKURS General State Examination for the pursuit of higher education.

Subjects Studied in India

After coming to India, choosing a course had many aspects: a few people debated, decided and even regretted a little studying the course. Refugee students who had first studied in Indian schools and then moved on to Indian higher education were comparatively better aware of the subjects and courses they wanted to study and pursue, respectively. Many students chose their subjects of specialisation with their future employment prospects in mind, so some students enrolled in classes because they were intrigued by the subject's concept, and for a few others, it was a whole new experience pursuing the subject about which they knew nothing or very little. But they also did not want to stray too far from the career path they wanted to pursue. Young Afghan refugees face a number of challenges before enrolling to higher education institutes; a few are outlined here.

i) Language Barrier: A barrier to higher education enrolment is language. Additionally, it calls for some type of connection to secondary education. A potential emphasis is laid on the knowledge of the English language, which is a medium of instruction in the classroom.²³ Forced migration tends to bring discontinuation in tertiary education which brings in significant educational gaps.²⁴ As it has been explained, though most of the refugees do know a tantamount of English which makes their travel, stay and survival easy, when it comes to knowing a proficient level of English that is acceptable in academics, it becomes a point of contention.²⁵ As English language is a crucial element in Indian education, they need to take extra classes to learn the language or utilise other coping techniques to get a basic comprehension of the subjects. In Afghanistan, English is taught as a second language in schools beginning in the fourth grade, when students are nine years old. The majority of the course syllabi are written in Dari. Many, who arrived in India, when they are young to attend school, experience linguistic challenges, which they are able to overcome with the support of private tutoring programmes. Additionally, it has been observed and explained that while language can be a barrier, many people are eager to learn and sincerely enrol in language programmes.²⁶ The findings of numerous research have demonstrated that some refugee students feel motivated to learn and increase their knowledge.²⁷ Additionally, groups like Khalsa Diwan Welfare Society and Don Bosco provide English language training/coaching classes for young Afghan refugees who come to Delhi to pursue higher education after completing their secondary education. However, Sikh Hindu Afghan refugees are not permitted to enrol in Don Bosco's English programmes.²⁸

ii) Missing Qualifications and Documents: Identity certificates are an essential part of refugee security because they are the first line of defence against arbitrary detention and deportation, as well as the first step towards obtaining social services.²⁹ As a result, the body in charge of issuing documents plays a crucial role in the refugee protection scheme.³⁰ Case studies show that when host countries are in charge of determining refugee status and issuing certificates, they are often inefficient, and when the responsibility is assigned to UNHCR, the agency's activities are restricted. Refugees in Thailand have been arrested or detained in an environment of bureaucratic disregard for their UNHCR refugee status papers.³¹ In Pakistan, UNHCR has not been allowed to screen or register refugees living outside the camps.³² The Department of Home Affairs in South Africa has been inconsistent in providing identification to known refugees. Asylum decisions can take up to three years, leaving refugees without identification for an extremely long time.³³ ID cards of refugees play an important role in acquiring admission to universities. However, on many occasions, the refugee ID cards are not taken into consideration by schools at the time of their enrolment.³⁴ Visas are also accorded to refugees who wish to apply for higher education institutions or for a work permit. Such measures keep them hopeful till the time they are able to access the refugee card.

Students, who enrolled themselves for higher education in India, after spending significant years in Afghanistan universities, did not join immediately, but only after a few months to a year's break. This time was basically used for exploring and understanding the language, the courses they would want to pursue and the admission process. The absence of centralised information systems for refugees about the higher education system in India hampers their admission process in higher education.³⁵ It might be essential for some refugees to enrol for a few years in post-secondary school to obtain the documents or certifications that will facilitate their entry into higher education. The lack of documents like academic qualifications and birth certificate indeed act as a hindrance in the enrolment process of higher education.³⁶ Similar problems have been faced by refugees in Greece, where a lack of documentation and of Greek language proficiency limited their ability to enrol in higher education and prevented them from attending classes at public universities. They also discovered, through an interview with a manager of a private college that the young refugee's ability to obtain any type of scholarship for higher education is harmed by a lack of documentation of the refugee's educational profile, thus far, including proficiency level in English. The UNHCR, over the years, has maintained and established relations with education authorities so that the application process of refugees entails less complicated documentation during admissions.³⁷ In some cases, where regulations are too strict to let go off the norms, BOSCO intervenes to support the refugees (e.g., by providing language classes, guidance in certain subjects).³⁸

iii) Course and Classroom Acclimatisation: Refugees in distress frequently acclimatise to the new system and are influenced by the host societies.³⁹ There are a variety of parameters that refugees adjust to, and the patterns and reasons for these adjustments are not always the same.⁴⁰ Afghan refugees in Indian higher education, in particular, need to adapt to the new academic course. The satisfaction with the course comes after grasping the new curriculum and learning the new course. The level of satisfaction of respondents with their respective courses was determined through questions asked with regard to acclimatisation. Only six of the nine responders said they were happy with the courses they were pursuing. The reason attributed to it was also the availability of peer support to help them understand the subject in detail. Having a peer group that facilitates as a support system is a prior requirement for any student. When a refugee undergoes the stress of assimilation at a new place it becomes very important to have the support of his/her fellow classmates in understanding a new course altogether. All respondents indeed made an account of easy assimilation in terms of understanding the new course or syllabus. Further, transitioning from one level of education to another one is a tough process for an individual, especially for refugees who frequently struggle to complete their secondary education.⁴¹ So the necessary completion of schooling often delays the refugee's integration into higher education.⁴² Maliha (pseudonym), a second-year B.Com student at Delhi University said that she had a good understanding of the current course and is satisfied with the subject she is studying. The reason for her easy transition and ability to make a firm course choice can be related to the fact that she completed her senior secondary education in an Indian institution and was able to choose her professional choice effortlessly.

Subsequently, there have been students who have some say over the course of action toward their future ambitions.⁴³ Ramia (pseudonym) said, "My father had laid emphasis on pursuing law due to the profession being women-friendly. It provides a sense of power and independence which a woman of the twenty-first century definitely needs. He wanted me to study law to represent Afghan refugee women." Besides, every respondent, regardless of any circumstance, made their own educational decisions. In fact, not all were influenced or pressurised by family members when deciding on a path of study. Despite the lack of evidence of family impact, 90 per cent respondents had briefly discussed the courses they would like to take with their families.

Refugees enrolled in higher education generally opt for IGNOU or Delhi University.⁴⁴ Sebi (pseudonym) enrolled in a computer science course at Sharda University. She was receiving a DAFI (Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative) scholarship at the time, but after a year of learning the intricacies of the curriculum, she decided to drop out. She was quoted saying:

There are a number of reasons for not continuing with the course, the most important of which was that the subject was not being taught in

the most efficient manner. I want more in-depth lectures in class because I am very new to the subject, and even frequent one-to-one discussion was inadequate. I eventually had to change from Sharda University to Indira Gandhi Open University. I also changed my subject from computer science to social work programme, having been dissatisfied with the former. This change in course and university affected me immensely as I no longer could avail the DAFI scholarship. But I wish to continue my higher education in the right direction and strive for a better future.'

On the contrary, Riyaz (pseudonym) said, "The subject I am pursuing is commerce and I had not at all studied accountancy at school in Afghanistan. In fact, I am really thankful to my classmates and even lecturers who were constantly helping me understand the subject from the basics."

The main concern for young Afghan refugees enrolled in higher education in Delhi has been the feedback on their performance in class and assignments. The teacher-student ratio is sometimes quite overwhelming; this acts as a deterrent to having personal discussions and individual attention. So, it becomes imperative for Afghan refugees to analyse their performance through scores reflected in assignments. The evaluation of assignments is satisfactory for some and concern for many. During the interview, five respondents were completely unhappy with the pattern of evaluation and the remarks. Huma (pseudonym), a student of psychology, at Delhi University, was completely displeased with the way instructors graded the projects. She raised her concern about the assessment methods adopted in the classroom and said, "We are now trying to study new subjects in a new environment, and when instructors mark our assignments without even alerting us, we are not able to learn anything. Constructive feedback, which is crucial to progress, is mostly lacking in the established university itself."

Fee Structure and Financial Support or Scholarship

The cost of higher education is a barrier to the participation of refugees in higher education. In fact, tuition fees differ greatly depending on the country and the type of institution (public or private, certificate or degree-granting, etc.). There are also several nations, for example, Brazil, Denmark and Finland, where there are no tuition fees.⁴⁵ However, the cost of higher education is not restricted to tuition fees only. Study materials, health insurance and food throughout the study period are additional expenses that need to be borne by the refugees.

Scholarship

Afghan students pursuing higher education frequently seek financial assistance in the form of a scholarship. UNHCR, Germany, Denmark and the Czech Republic, in partnership with DAFI, offer scholarships to a few selected refugees in India who are selected through an admission test for only the

undergraduate degree. This scholarship is offered in the asylum-seeking country or the applicant's home country. DAFI scholarship, in tandem with the German Embassy and the UNHCR, supports undergraduate students monetarily.⁴⁶ As per the scholarship DAFI⁴⁷ guidelines, tertiary students need to try inculcating the following abilities:

- Become self-reliant and competent for employment and entrepreneurship opportunities
- Gain awareness and leadership skills that will help students sustain a peaceful atmosphere in their host countries and when they return to their home countries
- Inculcate ethical form of lifelong learning
- Attract and make students aware of the importance of education through role models and societal and community engagements.

The basic condition for applying for a UNHCR scholarship is to obtain UNHCR refugee status. The UNHCR only conducts interviews after the asylum seeker status is changed to refugee status. Moreover, approximately 20 students are chosen each year from a large number of applicants. Even though the scholarship is provided by UNHCR, students are still admitted as foreign students and must go through the same admission process as any other foreign student.

DAFI scholarship, which is one of the scholarship available for Afghan refugee students, does not promise adequate benefits monetarily. Earlier, the scholarship⁴⁸ included tuition fees, admission fees, registration fees, money to buy books, and a monthly stipend of INR 3,800 to all the selected candidates. But currently, all four recipients have mentioned an increased scholarship structure. All of the respondents were displeased as the revised amount is inadequate to cover all expenses. A monthly stipend of INR 5,000 is also not enough to cover monthly expenses. Farhaan (pseudonym), who studies political science and commutes daily from Malviya Nagar to Kalkaji, adds: "As the cost of living rises in this cosmopolitan city, so do the expenses; daily travel from home to college is becoming more expensive, and an auto ride during an emergency is a luxury that cannot be afforded on a daily basis with this fellowship." DAFI scholarship in 2021 is categorised as follows:

- INR 20,000 per year for college fees
- INR 10,000 per year for books and stationery
- INR 5,000 per month as a fellowship, making INR 60,000 yearly

*Source: DAFI Scholarship, 2021 Report*⁴⁹

Many respondents were asked if their fellowship had been consistent since they enrolled, and nearly all confirmed positively. Additionally, an enquiry was made about any possibility of any future increase in fellowship, but majority of the respondents refused to answer the question and only one did explain that scholarship increases are contingent on the budget that the

German embassy sets for DAFI researchers in India each year. If the budget is increased, the fellowship and tuition price, which is a scholarship for students, will be increased; otherwise, it will remain the same.

The scholarship can be granted only once and only to one member of the family. If a family has two wards enrolled in higher education, only the one, who is able to clear the entrance or interview process, can avail it and the other student sibling cannot even apply. Also, if a student receives a scholarship and then changes universities or courses, the award will be terminated and one cannot apply again. Even though a conscious attempt was made to ask questions about the legitimacy and time range of the scholarship, all of the interviewees were found to be aware of the terms and conditions of the DAFI fellowship. Moreover, when a student is unable to complete the studies within the agreed-upon time frame, the scholarship does not get extended. Every interviewee stated that the scholarship is only for a three-year term. If the scholarship is not completed within the three-year time span, it will be forfeited. Even a DAFI scholar who was studying B.Sc. in computer science at Sharda University subsequently realised that social work, rather than computer science, was her vocation. After a year, she changed her major from Computer Science to B.A. in Social Work at IGNOU, resulting in her forfeiting her scholarship and its benefits. It is no longer available to her family, despite the fact that her younger brother is enrolled in higher school.

The tuition fees also differ widely by students' residency status,⁵⁰i.e., for refugees, some countries waive tuition expenses, while others offer the home fee. In the case of India, there is no such option due to which Afghan refugees have to bear the consequences of learning. Others classify refugees as international students and charge them a higher tuition cost.

Higher Education Fees

After overcoming the barriers which act as primary stages of the hurdle, Afghan refugee students enrolled in higher education in Delhi, then have to arrange for the means to access higher education. Despite the fact that there are several possibilities for programme selection, refugees are less likely to pursue those courses owing to their high costs; the refugee students tend to save the money, which might be needed for their survival at the new place.⁵¹ The same might be the reason for not attending higher education for a few others too, which leads to the percentage of students enrolling in higher education very less. Only 5 per cent refugees have access to higher education, which is far lower than the global average of 39 per cent for non-refugees.⁵² Furthermore, there are certain number of aids, scholarships or alternatives which do exist and are only extended to national students and not refugees.⁵³ So the lack of any type of financial assistance acts as a deterrent, although in the case of Afghan refugees in India, only BOSCO facilitates DAFI scholarship. All respondents, with the exception of one, agreed that the cost of attending college was high in light of the aforementioned concern. Only one respondent disagreed with the fact that tuition fees were excessive. Sania (pseudonym) commented, "I enrolled in Sharda University for a degree in

political science and also did not receive any scholarship. I am very upset with the university's cost structure. Sharda University is a private institution which charges a tuition fee of around 1050 USD. It has become difficult for me to bear the fee.”

Another dimension added to the bearing of high education costs is the burden of enrolment of refugee students under the same category as foreign students. Hence, an Afghan refugee student is enrolled as a foreign national and the fees levied are in accordance with foreign student standards. Few countries, for example, Canada, also classify refugees as international students and charge them a higher tuition cost⁵⁴. As a result, the expensive price structure for refugee students adds to the burden of being stateless.

According to the respondent, the fee levied for Afghan refugee students in Delhi is three times that of the fees paid by Indian nationals. The expenses that Afghan refugees incur as students in particular, can be a disincentive for them to pursue higher education. In some situations, students are able to pay the fees because their families are able to work or run a business, but for many, the inability to rely on family income has become a source of misery. Although there were a number of students enrolled on a scholarship, none of the respondents' families were financially secured enough to bear the full responsibility of higher education.

Further, fees paid in addition to the tuition fees, for example, the miscellaneous or extra-curricular fees including sports, laboratories, libraries, and other services can be an expensive or unaffordable affair. The four recipients who were availing the scholarships admitted that fees paid in addition to tuition fees were not at all pocket-friendly. Although for three scholarship recipients paying extra-curricular fees was not an out-of-budget affair. Due to extensive discussions with them, it was found that they were engaged in paid volunteering and internships while studying for undergraduate courses which made these extra fees somewhat affordable for them.

Conclusion

Despite an increase in the population of Afghan refugees in Delhi considerable support from the UNHCR and the Government of India is still lacking. Though UNHCR's refugee card does provide them a permit to pursue higher education in India, it does not ensure any special status or recognition in college admissions, in fact, it adds a challenge to their dreams. Although certain measures and assistance are provided to them by DAFI, BOSCO, and Khalsa Diwan Society, the economic and social crisis remains unresolved. While Indian higher education broadens the prospects for work and livelihood, the refugee status impedes the opportunities for Afghan refugees. So the challenges continue to persist in the Indian higher education system. The reality is that their options will be limited until (a) the educational system collaborates with societal organisations; (b) if assimilated, it is recognised as a demographic dividend; and (c) all parts of the higher education institution contribute, taking into account the willingness (willingness in terms of mobility has been taken into consideration) of young

Afghan refugees to meet the demands of Indian higher education system. Refugees' identities lead to marginalisation, which may have an impact on future progress. These growth aspects can be in particular stressful and disruptive for the youth population who are on the move. The Afghan refugee youth population yields great demographic dividend factors which when utilised in a more channelised way can become a push factor for the growth indices of a nation. The young generation requires a strong educational opportunity to be able to alter their condition or be beneficial to the residing state, and most importantly, to enhance their living standards.

Notes

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