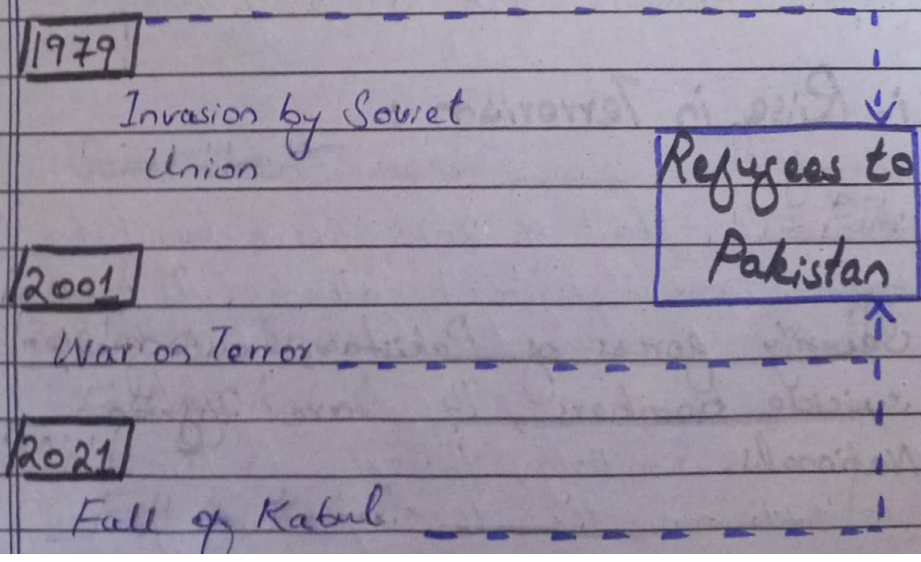


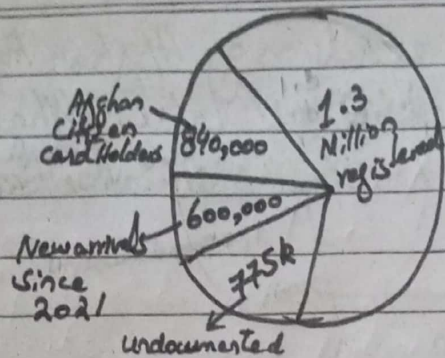
Q- There is looming expulsion of Afghan Refugees. which has been criticized lately. What should Pakistan do to handle the situation in a better way?

1- Introduction :

On 3rd October, 2023 the interim government of Pakistan announced that almost two million refugees in the country must leave by the end of month or will be deported. This decision was welcomed by local resident however criticized by international community like Amnesty International and UNHCR. There were different reasons behind this decision including the rise in terrorism, ^{smuggling of} dollar and economic pressure on country. However, it is better to use strategic vision by ensuring voluntary repatriation and safe return of refugees.

2- Afghan Refugees in Pakistan: A Historic Glance :





Total = 3.7 Million
Afghan Refugees
in Pakistan

(Current Ratio of Afghan Refugees in) Pakistan

3. Causes for Decision of Expulsion of Afghan Refugees:

Pakistan is a home to one of the largest world's refugee hosting country, and most of refugees in Pakistan are Afghans. Since 1979, Pakistan is hosting Afghan refugees and different donor agencies like UNHCR provided financial and humanitarian assistance in hosting refugees. However, the recent trend in geopolitics of country was due to different reasons which are as follows:

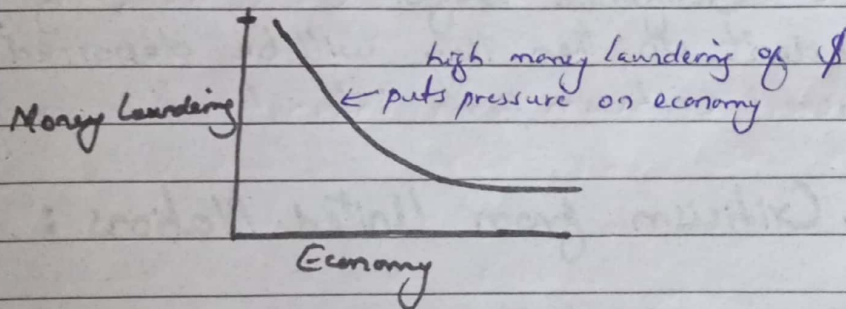
i- Rise in Terrorism:

Since the start of 2023, there has been immense rise in terrorist attacks. As per Security forces of Pakistan, out of 24 suicide bombers, 14 are Afghan Nationals. Similarly, the rise in terrorism is 17% more than the previous year.

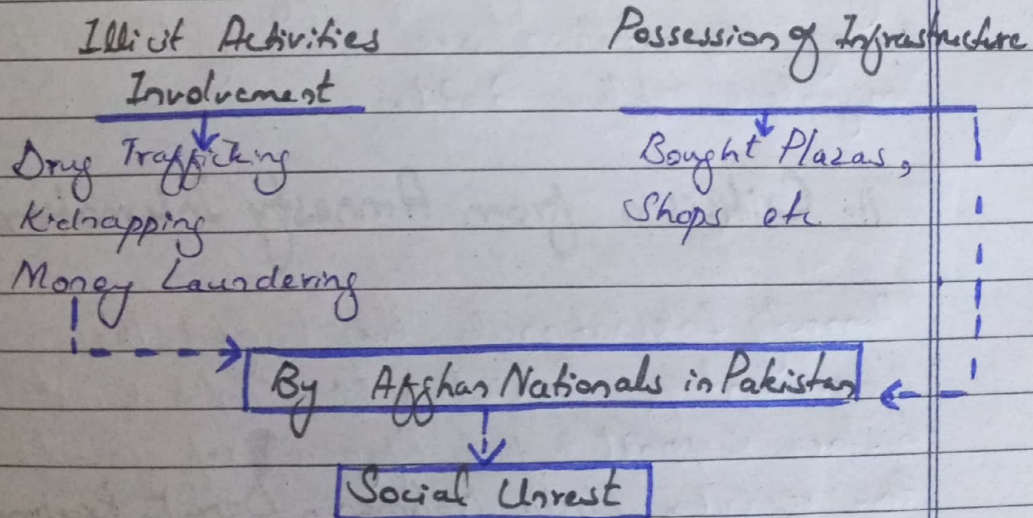
which became one of the reasons behind decision of expulsion of Afghan refugees.

ii- Smuggling of Dollars to Afghanistan:

Since the 2021 take over of Afghan Taliban government in Afghanistan, the flow of international aid and dollars has been stopped. It is putting pressure on currency market of Pakistan as it depends on Islamabad for fulfilling dollar needs. Afghanistan needs 10 to 15 million dollars on daily basis, half of which have been smuggled by Afghan money launders from Pakistan.



iii. Growing Social Problems :



iv. Geopolitical Compulsions :

Pakistan is facing significant problems at a time, economic crisis, political turmoil, security threats from growing terrorism etc. This make its compulsory to take stern action to restore normalcy as Government of Pakistan is left with no option.

4. Impacts Against Decision of Expulsion of Afghan Refugees :

After the announcement of decision of Afghan Refugee, when caretaker Interior Minister **Sarfaraz Buzti** said that, "if they don't do, then they will be deported" received criticism from international community.

i- Criticism from United Nations :

UN and Global Human Rights groups have shown concerns over this decision. They say that most of the Afghan Nationals facing deportation are among those who migrated after 2021.

ii- Criticism from Amnesty International:

Amnesty International has urged The Government of Pakistan to continue its historic support for Afghan refugees. In this regard, Nida Rehman, Deputy Regional Director for Research in South Asia said that,

"Afghans in Pakistan are fleeing persecution of Afghan Taliban. They are living precarious lives and forced return to Afghanistan could put them at grave risk."

iii- Concerns on Decision by UNHCR:

UN High Commissioner for Refugees termed this plan as disconcerting, and said that body was seeking clarity from government partners. In this regard, Rustom Shah Mohmand, Pakistan's former ambassador to Afghanistan said that, "this decision will be nail in coffin for Pakistan's goodwill."

5- What Pakistan Needs to Do?

It is important to acknowledge that Pakistan has played a key role in making Afghanistan stand on its feet. However, this decision holds complexities along significance for Pakistan. These complexities have been analyzed by statement of Rustom Shah Mohmand,

"What ever little good Pakistan has left will be erased. In this atmosphere of acrimony how will we import electricity and gas from Tajikistan and Turkmenistan to Afghanistan? How will Afghanistan become critical member of BRI? Why is strategic vision missing so badly?"

Some of policy options available for Pakistan in this regard are:

i- Adopting a Strategic Vision:

13 Sep, 2023

Chinese Ambassador
to Afghanistan

Need of Strategic Vision for
Ongoing Decision

Assumption Generated

What if India Does the
Same?

→ **May be Challenging
for Pakistan**

ii- Framing Workable Policies:

It is important to take in consideration that Afghans are currently running many businesses in Pakistan. Moreover, due to bad economic condition of Afghanistan, a large number of Afghani diasporas is in Gulf countries and Europe. They send a lot of money to their families in Pakistan, so Islamabad need to frame workable policies in this regard.

iii- Voluntary Repatriation of Refugees:

It is important to facilitate voluntary repatriation to ensure their safe and dignified return. Work with agencies to facilitate the safe and voluntary repatriation of Afghan refugees.

iv- Communication and Transparency:

Communicate clearly with Afghan leadership

about the reasons for expulsion. It is important to keep both international and ^{community} refugees informed to mitigate potential misunderstandings.

v- Cooperation with International Organizations and Regional Partners :

Through collaboration with international organizations and regional partners like China effectively, can help Government of Pakistan. It may work towards sustainable solutions that prioritize the well being of refugees while simultaneously addressing its own stability concerns.

vi- Diplomatic Engagement with Afghanistan :

There are different militant groups in the land of Afghanistan which used the land for planning terrorists attacks in Pakistan. For instance, TTP (Tehrik Taliban Pakistan), Daesh, BLP, Khorasan and other extremist groups. It is crucial to engage in diplomatic relations with Afghan Taliban leadership to solve issues on the table.

vii- Ensuring Social Reintegration in Afghanistan :

Pakistan is not a permanent home for Afghan refugees and they have to return

back someday. Social reintegration programs can be carried out for assisting the returning refugees in rebuilding their lives.

6- Comparative Analysis of Looming Expulsion of Afghan Refugees: Lessons from Turkiye:

Turkiye is one of the world's largest refugee hosting country. It has framework of policies and asylum for refugees. Knowledge sharing of best practices for refugee or asylum framework would be a key element of growing partnership between the two states.

7- Conclusion:

In a nutshell, the current situation of economy and security threats from Taliban residing in Afghanistan has put Pakistan in a situation leaving no choice except expulsion of refugees. However, the decision can be achieved through a strategic framework which does not leave potential impact on lives of returning refugees.

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