

**Transnational Crimes and Human Trafficking:  
A Study of Humanitarian Crisis on Pak-Afghan Border**

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**Abstract:**

In the era of globalization, war has become a part of history, while, cooperation is the new normal and the state's grand strategy. In developing countries, the continuum execution of military operations, low standards of socio-economic conditions for natives/ migrants, natural calamities, and complex forces against border security provide a conducive environment for the heinous expansion of human traffickers. Globally, Afghanistan and Pakistan have consistently maintained their higher ranking in global slavery index due to vulnerable security situation. Since 9/11 attacks have promoted socio-economic problems and challenged the peace-building efforts in Afghanistan. The study aims to explore the deep linkages of the rising threat of human trafficking and its consequences for both countries. This study elucidates that the fluctuations in building trust and conflicting national interests impeded the development of peaceful consensus on the regularization of the Pak-Afghan border, and; it has caused serious threats to the human security of both nationals. It also provides a cushion in the proliferation of human smugglers. This qualitative study involved a phenomenological approach for primary data collection while analysis is done via narrative and content analysis method.

**Keywords:** Afghanistan, Pakistan, Durand Line, border management, transnational crimes, humanitarian crisis, human trafficking

**INTRODUCTION**

Human trafficking is not only regarded as a heinous crime but it encompasses the root cause of several state-level problems. It is considered one of the largest sources of generating revenue by using illegal ways of smuggling humans including men, boys, women, girls, and children across the border of states. Indeed, it is unanimously recognized as offensive exploitation and a severe violation of international human rights globally (Schendel, Lyons, & Ford, 2012). This transnational crime has a strong network system and spread in all countries including Canada in an organized manner. It is necessary to understand the main concept of human trafficking in the light of article 3,

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paragraph (a) of the *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons* of United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) as guardian of United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC). The article explains:

Trafficking in Persons as the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labor or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime [UNODC], 2016a).

The elements of human trafficking are clearly defined in the above article, essential for building the context of this study. The study aims to explore the deep linkages of the rising threat of human trafficking and its consequences for both countries. This study elucidates that the fluctuations in building trust and conflicting national interests impeded the development of peaceful consensus on the regularization of the Pak-Afghan border, and; it has caused serious threats to the human security of both nationals. It also provides a cushion in the proliferation of human smugglers.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Numerous studies and reports are enunciated by famous international organizations, governmental & non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and International committees and institutions for materializing the trends of human trafficking in South Asian countries concretely. Moreover, they have described the structural nature, connectivity, and influence from local to international markets. The unpremeditated factors like endemic poverty, inequality in the distribution of resources, cultural & social practices, humanitarian crisis, unemployment, gender stereotypes, financial dependency, illiteracy, public sector corruption, economic upheavals, private sector complexities, unawareness about legal rights, non-applicability of international law; prevailing on a national and international level play a vital role and governing forces in the movement of person(s) within and across the border and promoting traffickers in a region (Aronowitz, 2009). The above-mentioned challenges bring the victims into a non-negotiable state that contributes to the booming of all types of trafficking and associated problems in a region. According to the UNODC report on human trafficking in the recent era, it is mentioned in the document that about 79percent of human trafficking is governed through sexual exploitation, the highest ratio as compared to other types of trafficking. The second most common form comprised of the labor force (18percent). While the third category of trafficking victims consists of 20percent of children. This entire data was gathered by UNODC surveying 155 countries of the whole world (UNODC, 2016b).

Like India and Nepal's major markets for human traffickers, there are other states in South Asia having a high quotient of human trafficking. In the current era, due to the highly crucial situation of 18 years of war on terror in Afghanistan and its drastic impacts on Pakistan, both states are intensively indulge in strategic efforts for the security paradigm (Ahmad & Bakht, 2016). This has created enormous space for the birth of humanitarian crises in both countries. In the meanwhile, both states are facing colossal challenges on their social, economic, and political grounds. Along with this, the involvement of locals in the illicit trade across the border also acts as a constant threat

for both states doing combined efforts against terrorism (Shah, 2013). The growth rate in the socio-economic development of Afghanistan and Pakistan is quite sedate. The situation gets worse in the presence of 2640 km long international border between both states.

Additionally, the gaps and hurdles are also addressed in different legal reports that have halted the government(s) and even the international community to prevent the entire world from the calamity of human trafficking. Although, different states in collaboration with regional corporations, United Nations and other international humanitarian organizations are working hard in different areas by using various methods of data collection to combat these illegal networks and their expansions. But the lack of detailed valid information, non-willingness of victims due to fear factors, and technological hindrances fail in achieving the required goals ("Afghanistan's growing humanitarian," 2021). Therefore, it is a huge challenging task for the regional and international community in contemporary conditions of South Asia to cater to all the propensities of human trafficking, detect the pedigrees of victims-offenders, rate of their network expansion, methodology and aftermaths of execution of laws against human traffickers.

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The nature of the study is qualitative. It is exploratory and descriptive research based on primary and secondary data resources. The primary data is collected through a phenomenological approach and semi-structured interviews of participants belonging to governmental and non-governmental organizations, academia, paramedical staff, lawyer, victims or their families, and media persons. The secondary data is based upon various national, and international governmental/ non-governmental organization reports, surveys, books, international media news reports, magazine reports, and journal and newspaper articles. While data analysis is accomplished by content and narrative research analysis techniques. The study has followed all the research ethical considerations throughout the study.

### **HUMAN TRAFFICKING WITH THE LENS OF CONFLICT THEORY**

Conflict theory analyses that all crimes or social issues are based upon economic and social motives. The constant conflict between the groups within a society promotes an environment of struggle and competition and creates space for more social conflicts and crisis. The concept of class difference and class struggle, by Karl Marx, encompasses the core idea of social conflict theory. The social conflicts often act as a driving force in governing the society and its dynamics (Usman, 2014). Powerful groups of traffickers frequently influence and exploit the less powerful or struggling groups and classes both among the traffickers and victims' families in the presence of low standards of socio-economic conditions. The rising ratio of struggling and exploitation among weaker social groups promotes more crimes, lawlessness, and insecurity at intra and interstate levels.

### **LINKAGES OF PAK-AFGHAN BORDER MANAGEMENT WITH HUMAN TRAFFICKING**

The state-level differences directly accelerate the crime rate and promote the serious violation of human rights on the intra-state and inter-state levels. When there exists chaos inside the state(s), this provides a conducive environment for the violent state and non-state actors to take advantage of the situation, the same as happened in Afghanistan and Pakistan cases. Both states are involved

in various bilateral peace agreements to combat terrorism but at the same time, both are playing blame games with each other via border clashes. The reluctance in the political behavior of political leadership, the failure of the diplomatic community, and the non-rational approach of both states towards the resolution of mutual differences strengthen the grounds for illegal trade on the soil of neighboring countries simultaneously (Ahmad, Bakht, & Kalim, 2017). Although, the only way to bring in both states is to negotiate practical solutions that serve the Pak-Afghan bilateral interests. The political differences between both states provides support to the traffickers and brings deleterious impacts on the commons, as, the absence of consensus, joint security forces exercises, and shared intelligence often create confusion on the border. In this way, the rising mistrust between political leadership and security forces on the demarcated border still paves the way for traffickers to take advantage of political clashes and remain progressive in their illegal trade. Adult men, women, and children (age group ranging from 12 to 18 years for BachaBazi & sex trade) are highly vulnerable to prostitution, smuggling, and slavery (Jalalzai, 2011). The trafficking of the vulnerable group is reported from inside local markets of eastern Afghanistan especially brick making, agriculture, and carpet weaving industries mainly comprised of bonded laborers, then drug trade in the southern region, Logar Province, to outside the Afghanistan borders to Iran, Pakistan, Greece, Turkey, and European countries (Hussain & Latif, 2012).

While human traffickers are expert enough to manipulate their victims through false promises, the migrant status of victims adds extra layer of being trapped, enhance their vulnerability or prone to exploitation. Also, the traffickers use anyone of the two strategies: a) Hunting strategy (the offender directly targets the victims), b) Fishing strategy (the offender waits for the victim's response to any of his offer) (UNODC, 2020). The first step they do is grooming by targeting their victims (both children and adults) like gaining their trust, meeting their needs, forcing them to displacement to the bordering areas, and isolating them from their families. The majority are displaced people residing in different camp cities either by use of coercion, threat, or deceiving their victims by offering them attractive incentives, a good lifestyle, the illusion of their reality, trust, security, or overseas employment to exploit them tremendously ("Love and trafficking," 2021). When the state is failed to provide security, and shelter and fulfill the basic needs of its people then they are easy prey for traffickers to use them like robots for their interests. Traffickers often treat the vulnerable community as their article of trade as it is done in a methodical intentional and strategic way. The second step they do is to suppress them by taking control of them, severely humiliating their human rights, and taking decisions for their fate. As the exploitation of victims is done through numerous means sold to other parties for low-graded jobs, household tasks, prosecution under the cover of fake or forced marriages, bonded labor, commercial sexual exploitation, organ harvesting, entertainment, criminal and terrorist activities ("How does human," 2020). Meanwhile, numerous health issues are reported among these vulnerable communities. Although, every state has formed certain laws for controlling crises within a country but the method of implementation of the law determines the actual crime rate in a particular state.

To combat human trafficking in Afghanistan and Pakistan, several laws are implemented side by side during the war against terrorism in Afghanistan in 2008 (Law of combating human trafficking), 2009 (Law on the Elimination of Violence against Women (EVAW)), and 2017 (Law to Combat Crimes of Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants). While, Article 510 of 2018 criminal code banned sex and labor trafficking, Article 511 has clearly explained the imprisonment punishment of 5 to 10

years for trafficking offenses for male victims and for females or children exploited in Bachabazi while the penalty exceeds up to 10-16 years (US Department of State, 2022a). In Pakistan, 2018 Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act (PTPA), Pakistan Penal Code (PPC): Section 371A and 371B describes the penalty of 25 years for selling & buying of the person(s) for prostitution, federal Bonded Labor System Abolition Act (BLSA) and the formulation of 24 special force namely anti-trafficking law enforcement joint task forces. In the presence of these laws, even 4.5 million bonded laborers nationwide were entrapped in bonded labor of which 70percent comprised children aged less than 18 years (US Department of State, 2022b). While considering the whole situation with little progress in the current era, no state is successful to take control of the networks of human traffickers and their activities in both countries because of inefficient political leadership, weak law and order situation, and implementation of the impractical solution(s) for Pak-Afghan border tensions. From 2018 to 2020, Pakistan has persistently maintained its 8<sup>th</sup> position in top 10 countries having high index of modern slavery at global level published by Walk Free Australian based organization ("Pakistan ranks eighth," 2020). While in 2018 Afghanistan is ranked at 5<sup>th</sup> position next to Central African Republic, which is an alarming situation highlighted by Walk Free organization ("Global SLavery Index." 2018). Figure 1 clearly shows the ranking of the states in the world shared by Walk Free official website.

**FIGURE 1**  
Estimated prevalence of modern slavery by country (noting 10 countries with highest prevalence, estimated victims per 1,000 population)

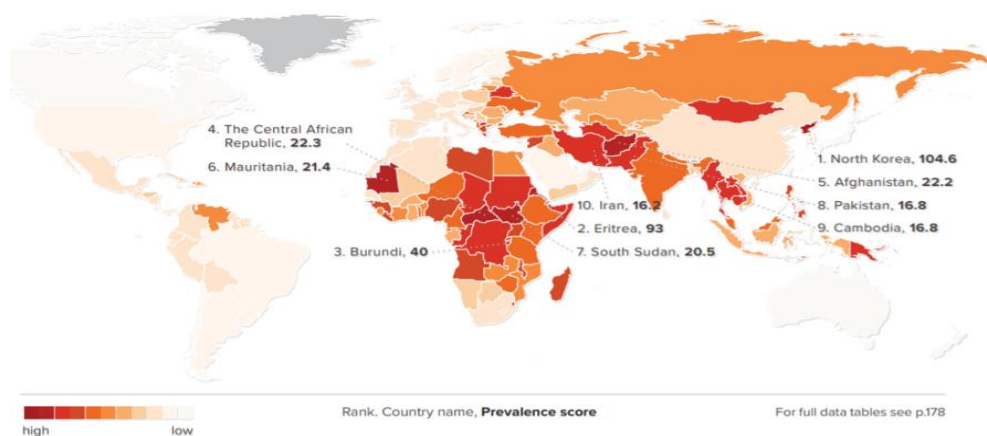


Figure1 (Source: Global Slavery Index (2018) by Walk Free Organization)

However, the security agencies and armed forces of Pakistan have done numerous operations to combat the network holders and rescue the victims but the state-level political differences often ruin the whole effort. This provides a conducive environment for human traffickers to survive and recruit susceptible individuals from both countries.

While referring to the *Recommended Principles and Guidelines on Human Rights and Human Trafficking 2002*, it is mentioned that it will be the responsibility of all states to ensure security for its individuals. For the provision of equal rights to humans in a state or society it is also stated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) adopted in 1948 that all human beings have equal freedom, dignity, and movement. No one shall be held in oppression or vassalage and no one is allowed to treat any other individual cruelly and inhumanly or punish the individual (Karrslon &

Mansory, 2007). Hence, the aforementioned declaration of human rights has determined that the state is ultimately responsible for ensuring and endowment of basic human rights for its individuals within its territory. Hence, the porous border between Pakistan and Afghanistan provided for the serious violation of these international conventions (Durani & Khan, 2011). The porous border of Afghanistan and Pakistan has provided direct fuel to the fire because both states unswervingly serve as sources, transit, and destination for victims.

### **Scope of Human Trafficking in Afghanistan and Pakistan**

Likewise, in other countries, offenders have formed different categories of tasks systematically for their victims in Afghanistan and Pakistan. The allocation of jobs in different categories is based on the available age group of the victim(s). Men have less ratio of being trafficked as compared to other communities. They are usually trafficked for industrial purposes like the construction of buildings, and bridges as a labor force and organ trafficking. This group mostly includes the volunteers both early adults and adults having fragile socio-economic status and ready to take the risks for their employment abroad. They are loaded in big containers of trucks, rails, ships, and planes along with goods and cartons. As a result, they lose their lives either caught and killed by border security forces or died in containers due to suffocation (Schendel et al., 2012).

Young boys under the age of 18 years are the most favorable group for human traffickers. Youngsters particularly those who do not need the assistance are advantageous for the human traffickers. They utilize them for child labor in different sectors, for sexual assaults by involving them with different networks for sending them to different parties and clubs to provide entertainment by exposing their private parts, dressing them in the girlish wardrobe for dancing in a club in front of parties or bear the pain of inhuman acts done by the parties that have paid for them. Also sometimes they are beaten or punished insanely by the owner while not fulfilling the demands of the paying party (Aronowitz, 2009). Human smugglers often torture them in different ways like they starve them for many days while the scars of wounds are deep enough that take time to heal up that are totally against and completely violates international children's rights. These strong networks have doctors and medical staff that secretly provide treatments to these victims and get huge pay for it. The majority of the migrants either the labor force or victims of human trafficking from Asia are in transit to the Middle East.

There are other examples like Eastern European, African, Iran, Iraq, Central, and South East Asian countries that act as source & transit countries of victims (exploited laborers, domestic workers, and commercial sex trade) to the oil-wealthy Gulf countries especially Dubai & United Arab Emirates (UAE) and European states. Instability and violence have forced the local population to migrate from their origin to other countries for their security and survival. There are several cases on record as it is mentioned that several Iraqi families have left their children at Syrian borders as human traffickers provide fake documents about vulnerable women and children in trade for their sex workers in brothels.

Conflicts between Afghanistan and Pakistan have produced a large vulnerable population to trafficking. Despite that, another fact revealed during the study is that the rate of human trafficking and sex workers is particularly high in those conflicted countries where international troops are present. For gathering more valid information about victimized people residing in border areas or

the conflicted areas of Afghanistan and Pakistan, strong resistance and reluctance have been faced during the study. The fear factor and being stigmatized in society never allow them to report even a single complaint in any security institution against the offenders. No law can save the victim(s) from traffickers unless the social practices and cultural norms are not changed, as they play a vital role in the support of human traffickers in both countries (Jalalzai, 2011).

While unfolding the other purposes of trafficking, the young boys are used for begging, and street crimes. They are abducted from different public and private localities like schools, streets, shrines, parks, and hometowns. They deceive them by using different psychological tactics. To gain their complete consent to go with them without creating any noise, they take their basic information about their home and family. Afterward, they start probing questions to gain the weak points of their target. Once they get those points, they involve them in different activities discreetly. In this manner, they send them to the target owners who sell them to other parties. These trainees are handed over to extremist groups and terrorist organizations for suicide bombing, spreading terror, and target killing. In this manner, they act as a big threat to the security of the state (Brasseur, 2011). This uncontrollable and unpredictable predator act as a gigantic driver of violence and forced criminality in a state(s). Hence, these traffickers are using the Pak-Afghan soil and resources tactfully for promoting insurgency in both countries. As they are a stringent tool of widespread, serve as a supply chain of adults/children to the local/international terrorist organizations, and act as a source of spreading insecurity, fear and abuse across the border. Though they also utilize unguarded people for organ trafficking by surgically removing their vital organs for exporting them to different organizations that are involved in organ harvesting for the profit-making process. Another way of generating revenue from young boys is to sell them to camel racers as slaves or camel jockeys. The network is working on the national and international level in a more organized manner that they had formed separate teams for each task, for each group.

For young girls, traffickers utilized them for various sexual assaults like prostitution, sex workers, dancing girls in clubs and bars, and sending them with drug traffickers for a safe supply of drugs and narcotics while women are utilized for cheap domestic servitude. The motivational force for victims to do these illegal tasks is to improve their socioeconomic condition in society. According to an estimate, out of all vulnerable female populations exploited as commercial sex workers, 70percent consists of young girls (Quinley, 2019). The poverty, unemployment, lack of opportunities for availing jobs in a safe environment, most importantly illiteracy, and unawareness make them easy targets for traffickers either for commercial sex workers, forced marriages, organ or drug trafficking. In addition to this, the chances of dreadful diseases like Hepatitis B/C, HIV, AIDS, benign & malignant cancers (either whole body or vital organs), sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), and skin infections are high in this population due to various reasons including unhygienic conditions, unsafe sexual activities, psychological tortures, numerous sex partners, timely non-availability of medical treatment(s), multiple time abortions and miscarriages due to physical abuse (Aronowitz, 2009).

Countries like Afghanistan and Pakistan have numerous internal and external security dilemmas. Along with this, they have conflicts on water disputes, mistrust and tensions in their bilateral relations, and declining socio-economic and security conditions in their country. There are massive impacts of porous border not only on the state level but on an individual level. When the situation is

worse in both countries then it stimulates social and economic crimes because governance is failed to enforce law and order in the country. Militants and their networks have a stronghold within both states, no border management, and inefficient law enforcement agencies give support to the human traffickers to feel free to do their illegal activities for generating billions of dollars for growing their network. This will also increase their influence from one state to another in such a favorable environment (Maley, 2009).

Human trafficking is also directly linked to the poor border management between Afghanistan and Pakistan. The declining socio-economic conditions of both states provide a foundation for human trafficking and also compel common people for securing a safe future to exploit them at the hands of traffickers. Both Afghanistan and Pakistan are the source, transit, and destination for trafficked men, women, and children. According to the report of the U.S. Department 2017 Trafficking in Persons Report, the government of Afghanistan has not done a lot of efforts in the recruitment of human traffickers. However, they endorsed laws against human trafficking to combat it on a larger scale (US Department of State, 2017). For taking control of facilitators of *Bacha Bazi* criminal activity in which boys are presented in front of men audience for dancing and sexual assaults; law enforcement agencies in Afghanistan need to do radical efforts as early as possible to recruit people from kidnapers, and human smugglers (Jalalzai, 2011). Afghan intelligence agencies and security forces should enlarge their circle of investigation against key stakeholders of human trafficking either within the country or in neighboring countries. However, the government has established 15 units and recruited more than 300 children from the kidnapper and human trafficking gangs under the new law enacted in January 2017, according to the report of Law to Combat Crimes of Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants (US Department of State, 2017).

The report published by the Federal Investigative Agency (FIA) of Pakistan for their grand operation against instigators, expeditors of human smugglers and traffickers have mentioned arrested offenders, year-wise. The strict control of FIA at notified crossing border points such as air, land, and sea routes restricts the movements of human smugglers and acts as a strong hindrance in their illegal trade activities. The human trafficking between Pakistan and Afghanistan is unique in this sense as most of the time due to identified cultures, shared ethnicities, alternate documents of POR cards, and under the cover of documented Afghan refugees across the Durand Line gives vote of doubt to the human traffickers by the security forces. In 2014, the number of arrested human traffickers was 785, in 2015 it is 1095, in 2016 and 2017 the number increased to 1604 and 2201 respectively. While in 2018 the ratio reaches 2675, the increase in the number of arrested human traffickers shows their stronghold inside the country, unidentified hidden hubs of traffickers, and chains of victim families across the borders. Moreover, they are expanding their networks each year. Alongwith arresting the criminals and masterminds, several steps have been taken to make it possible like the establishment of the Anti-Human Trafficking Circle, the use of advanced technology Integrated Border Management System (IBMS), the Edison system for forgery detection, UV light, magnifying glass, scanners, and CCTV cameras. While the government of Pakistan has also formed Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF) which assists and coordinates with security forces and agencies.

Researcher observes that although the Afghan government has introduced new laws for controlling and combating human trafficking in Afghanistan it will not bring desired results unless and until



their borders are not managed appropriately. Meanwhile, Pakistan has also introduced laws such as Pakistan Penal Code for Human Trafficking for the same purpose. Along with this, the government of Pakistan has also mainstreamed its Federally Administrated Tribal Region (FATA) region while merging it into the of Khyber Phuktoonkhwa (KP) through an amendment in the 1973 Constitution of Pakistan for improving their legal, administrative, territorial, political, law and order situation and socio-economic (Babakhel, 2018) . Due to a lot of administrative hurdles and implementation problems in tribal areas, it may further allow human traffickers to carry out their illegal activities by exploiting the same region. While this constitutional reform has raised hatred on the Afghan side against Pakistan and has insecurity on this political transformation of FATA region status. Several Afghan political wings have strongly retaliated to FATA merger in KP and spread hatred against Pakistan (Fahad, 2017). Nevertheless, better management of Pak-Afghan border can ensure the implementation of these laws and in catching the human traffickers.

While inquiring about the poor border management as a source of human trafficking between both states, Khalida Rehman, an expert in human rights and a lawyer, has endorsed her views about human trafficking in Afghanistan and Pakistan that the level of unemployment, poverty, and weak security conditions are supporting human trafficking in both countries. The porous nature of the border in this regard acts as a facilitator for human traffickers to carry out these activities safely and soundly. She has described that she has taken interviews with several Afghan, Pakistani, and Bengali women in rehabilitation centers and psychiatry wards of government hospitals for listening to their unheard experiences and journey of their smuggling and victimization via human traffickers. The majority of the females are 15 to 24 years old. They had attempted to escape from the centers of human traffickers, and are now living their lives in different centers of governmental and non-governmental organizations. Firstly, they were forced by their in-laws and husbands to enter into prostitution and sex trafficking markets only for improving their socio-economic conditions by taking the advantage of weak security conditions on borders. These women have revealed their miserable condition that they were doing this to feed their children. But they had escaped that torture cell intentionally and the 'Big Man' (head or organizer of human trafficker) will punish them brutally whenever they found a clue of their presence. A victim has mentioned her painful experience that Big Man and his coworkers always tortured all victims inhumanly by beating them during training, sometimes making them starve to gain their consent and abusing them via electric shocks, insects, injecting drugs, and physical sexual punishments or sexual assaults (Khalida Rehman, Personal Communication, Feb. 10, 2018).

### **Psychological and Social effects of Human Trafficking**

According to the Trafficking in Person Report in Pakistan by State Department (2022b), the statistics shared by the provincial police are 18,543 trafficking victims to the government or NGOs for care, including 2,316 men, 14,607 women, and 1,595 boys while this shows sharp increase from 11,803 cases as compared to previous years (US Department of State, 2022b). The torture of human traffickers caused severe impacts on the psychological health of the large number of victims including all age groups across the gender mainly depression, anxiety, fears caused by traumatic events, antisocial/ paranoid behaviors, suicidal thoughts/attempts, insomnia, sadness, sometimes speaking loudly about their assaults, remembering their premarital life under grieve, especially on national/ ethnic festivities or stay silent for many days, attempts of killing their babies/ health care

staff, and bipolar disorder. They often feel persistent hopelessness till their death as no social acceptance and support is given to them from their parents, family members, caretaker, or society for them. No easy and fast provision of justice, law, and security is available to them by both states. They are citizens of their states but have suffered in their lives as a second-class citizen or illegal nationals throughout their life inside their country and across the border as well. Along with this, various rehabilitation center health care staff (in Pakistan) have reported during discussions with researchers that the majority of underage girls and women (mainly the patients are Afghan, Pakistani, Uzbeks, Kurds, and Indians) got pregnant as a result of sexual violence/ forced marriages/ marital rapes done by traffickers/ clients. But the exploitation never ends here, as except few majorities faced forced and frequent abortions that deteriorate the reproductive health of trafficked females. In the absence of proper medical treatment and unsafe contact with multiple traffickers and clients in human trafficking markets, these female victims have a high chance of developing life threaten diseases. The lack of a regularized system of border management and illegal activities has deeper linkages with the nontraditional security threats for both states. Until and unless the measures are taken for border management clashes at the state level, no framework can bring fruitful results for both states. As Jeffrey C. Alexander in his book *Trauma: A Social Theory* deeply studied the traumas and the impacts of traumas on social behaviors and upbringing social conflicts (Alexander, 2012).

Moreover, the traumas do not merely have psychological nature but they are powerful enough in causing social conflicts, social suffering, and insecurity among groups and communities across the societies. In this way, it can be assumed that the traumas caused by human trafficking through Pak-Afghan border to the vulnerable Pakistani and Afghan victims have deeper linkages with the rising insurgencies, terrorism, human security crisis, and instability. The increased rate of crime via porous borders is involved in the serious violation of several international conventions and Human Rights. Besides this, the national security of both countries is at stake and increasing the level of their vulnerability at the hands of criminal networks (Dr. K. Rehman, Personal Communication, February 10, 2018).

According to the report of International Labor Organization (ILO) published in 2017, each year more than 12 million people are trafficked globally only because of their vulnerable socioeconomic and security conditions. There is an estimate of 70 percent of females under the age of 25 are trafficked. Women and girls are disproportionately affected by forced labor, accounting for 99percent of victims in the commercial sex industry, and 58percent in other sectors (International Labour Organization [ILO], 2017). The level of human trafficking is alarming in Pakistan. According to the UNODC briefing to the Ministry of Interior of Pakistan in 2013, there are 1000 human trafficker networks involved in the illegal trade of individuals. According to their report, a bulk of 'illegal migration' occurred from Punjab, particularly from Gujrat, Gujranwala, Mandi Bahauddin, Dera Ghazi Khan, Multan, and Sialkot. The cities with the highest number of interventions in the country were Lahore, Gujranwala, Faisalabad, and Peshawar. The level of modern slavery in Pakistan is increasing with time. Therefore, according to the Global Slavery Index (GSI), 2,058,200 people are still enslaved in Pakistan and the country ranks third on the index. The ranking of the country in the index is raising questions about the performance of law enforcement agencies and government policies for providing employment and security to its citizens (Bhatti, 2015).

Furthermore, regional organizations like South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), Bali Process,<sup>4</sup> and UN & its organs such as UNODC, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in collaboration with Afghanistan and Pakistan have signed different memorandums and agreements to ensure the prevention of smuggling and trafficking from member states. One of the major agendas of SAARC is to combat sex trafficking from the South Asian region. Article-II of the SAARC convention *Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Women and Children for Prostitution*,<sup>5</sup> (concluded on May 1, 1997), talks about cooperation among member states against trafficking in person and efforts for eradication of crime rate from the region. Most of the states in the South Asian region are lacking legislation on sex trafficking (SAARC, 1997). Hence, the UN, international human rights, and SAARC convention on sex trafficking are breakthroughs and provide guidelines to those state(s) for devising the framework against all types of trafficking and their activities. As in the era of complex interdependence, the peace-building process and controlling human trafficking crisis in both states favor regional peace as changing dynamics of security condition and rising level of illegal and inhuman activities will disturb regional integrity and has ripple effects on regional security complex. Therefore, it is high time for all the regional and international stakeholders including the Pak-Afghan governments to manage the inclusive regularization of border movement and ensure peace and harmony with people-to-people connectivity.

### **Suggestions for Countering Human Trafficking in Afghanistan and Pakistan**

1. For the eradication of human trafficking, there is a need for a joint venture of all members to do joint efforts in the South Asian region. In this regard, both Afghanistan and Pakistan, the key members of SAARC, should elaborate their problems on this forum to mitigate the illegal trade of persons from their states. In this manner, it will not only help both countries to find out the gaps and hindrances coming in the way of prevention of these networks but also allow other members to play their role in the rescue of victims. By utilizing the SAARC forum, both states can present their SWOT analysis to the international community about their fight against trafficking in person.
2. Also, they can call on other nations to formulate a joint force including all SAARC members and European Union, to initiate a grand operation against Human Trafficking networks by consuming both technical assistance and military forces.
3. Moreover, on a societal level different NGOs, human rights activists and civil society should come forward to assist their respective governments in controlling this social crime.

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<sup>4</sup> It is an international forum for policy dialogue, information sharing and practical cooperation to help the region address these challenges about People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime

<sup>5</sup> The purpose of this Convention is to promote cooperation amongst Member States so that they may effectively deal with the various aspects of prevention, interdiction and suppression of trafficking in women and children; the repatriation and rehabilitation of victims of trafficking and prevent the use of women and children in international prostitution networks, particularly where the countries of the SAARC region are the countries of origin, transit and destination.

4. Encouraging the local population in constructive work by involving them in the building of community centers, increasing the productivity of local products, supporting local labor, and promoting community services projects can help promote healthy environment of good governance and responsible citizenship.
5. Moreover, the local governments can develop various amusement parks, technical institutes, and counseling centers for all age groups to keep them stay positive while dealing with daily life socio-economic challenges.
6. For confidence building among citizens on security forces, various alerts, toll-free numbers, and helpline numbers of emergency police and rescue mobile services must be introduced by local administrations and police services on public sites, bus stops, railway stations, parks, markets, mosques/ churches, IDP camps, shelter homes, educational institute hostels, shrines, graveyard, academic schools, institutions, entry/exit points of cities and roads to report any near police stations or security agencies about any unusual person movement observed against law in any area of the state.
7. To raise the law and order situation in remote and bordering areas, complaint cells should be established that gather data about offenders and victims while maintaining the confidentiality. These complaint cells are directly monitored by the ministry of interior and law enforcement agencies of both states.
8. The escaped victims after gaining their proper treatment can help the police forces in countering the traffickers through their visual and memory-based observations.
9. The vehicle checking force at entry and exit points of both states via air, roads, and sea routes should be well equipped and ensure the utility of highly sensitive and advanced-level human detectors along with metal detectors during their investigation of any vehicle, trucks, busses, ships, carriages, and cargoes.
10. The involvement of neighboring countries and civil society initiatives against human trafficking will not only rescue the victims but also protect the other vulnerable community. It will also bring the desired results for both countries to trace the main hubs and centers of stakeholders of social crimes.

## CONCLUSION

The poor border management is not in the favor of both Afghanistan and Pakistan, neither in 18 years of war against terrorism nor in the Taliban government post-15 August, 2021. Both states should acknowledge the fact that peace is inevitable but it can be guaranteed between both states if the border is secure and well managed by the collaboration of both governments. The increased rate of crime is a serious violation of several international conventions and Human Rights. Therefore, to curb the crime rate and illicit trade volume, the ultimate solution is to manage and regularize the border according to international laws and standards. As fulfilling the needs of local communities, the provision of their basic rights and a secure environment is all time challenge for both governments. This is a prerequisite for both states to get out of all other socio-economic and security challenges with a faster pace and pragmatic approach. The end of the blame game and taking radical steps for developing joint ventures and signing MoUs on a bilateral level for border management with mutual interest will support tremendously in controlling the humanitarian crisis between both countries.

The settlement of the political differences and better border management between Afghanistan and Pakistan is the need of the hour. Because the porous nature of the border provides a conducive medium for the human smugglers to supply their victims and slaves to other stakeholders and govern their business in an organized manner at national, regional, and international levels. Furthermore, there is a dire need for the incorporation of recommended guidelines of UNODC, UDHR, and other UN conventions of Human Rights and International Laws against Human Trafficking in the legislative framework of both states. The strict implementation of these laws and conventions not only bound both countries to protect the human rights of their individuals at any cost but also help them in lowering the crime rate. Both countries are required to take radical steps for raising the socioeconomic condition of their nationals. The reforms in their governance issues and policies, will promote a sense of security among their masses and build trust in their governments. There is a need of taking initiatives for joint ventures between intelligence agencies of both states for capturing traffickers and rescuing the victims. All these steps will immensely contribute to gaining the goals of national security, while, subjugating the key facilitators and stakeholders of human trafficking in both countries.

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