

Challenges in Providing Protection to the Conflict-Affected Refugee Children in Pakistan: A Critical Analysis of the 1951 Refugee Convention

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Abstract : The Afghan refugee children in Pakistan are considered as the most vulnerable persons in danger of being abused and treated badly as compared to the minimum criteria of the protection of refugee children under 1951 refugee convention. This paper explores the impact of the 1951 refugee convention on the protection of refugee children, affected by the armed conflict in Afghanistan, residing in refugee camps in Pakistan. Despite, protection available under Refugee Convention, there exist millions of refugees in the world, including a huge portion of women and children, that remain unprotected, and their protection remains a challenging task for the world community. This study investigates the status and number of refugees in Pakistan, especially children; protection and assistance of refugees under Refugee Convention; protection of the rights of refugee children in Pakistan; and implementation of the rules of Refugee Convention relating refugee children in Pakistan and measures for the protection of refugee children in Pakistan. This socio-legal study utilizes a qualitative research approach and applies mixed methods of data collection. The primary data is collected through the interpretation of the legal framework available for the protection of refugees as well as domestic laws of Pakistan. The secondary data is collected through previous studies available on the same topic. The result of this study indicates that lack of proper implementation of the rules, of the Refugee Convention, relating protection of refugee children cause sufferings to refugee children including the provision of basic health, nutrition, family life, education and protection from child abuse. Pakistan needs a comprehensive domestic legal framework for the protection of refugees, especially refugee children. Moreover, the government of Pakistan with the help of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) must prioritize the protection of Afghan refugee children as per standard criteria provided by the refugee convention 1951.

Keywords : refugee children, refugee convention, armed conflict, Pakistan

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