

REFUGEES IN SOUTH ASIA: AN OVERVIEW

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Most significant developments in the recent times have been the increasing strength of refugees caused due to multiple reasons such as ethnic, communal and religious violence. Today very few states are ethnically homogeneous. This is manifest from the fact that approximately 5,000 ethnic groups and over 8,000 languages exist in the world today.ⁱ Ethnic antagonisms between Hutus and Tutsis, Armenians and Azeris, Tamil and Sinhalese, and Serbs and Croats and Muslims illustrate the roots of many refugee exoduses. Virtually all of the refugees producing conflicts are found within states rather than among states.

Numerous factors have contributed to the growing scale and speed of forced displacement. New form of violence and warfare have emerged particularly in collapsing states where competing warlords destroy entire social, economic and political system in their fight for a share of resources. The growth in the worldwide market in small arms and land mines have made internal wars more violent. Consequently conflicts today displace more people than it used to have been doing in the past time. One study has concluded that the numbers of forcibly displaced have risen from 400,000 per conflict in 1969 to 857,000 per conflict in 1992.ⁱⁱ

Mass expulsions, thus, has become a regular phenomenon which is being used as a weapon of war these days. Governments and their opponents for a variety of political and military purposes use population displacements as a tool to settle their disputes. Such strategies help governments to maintain control over people, territory and other resources. They can be used to establish culturally or ethnically homogenous societies, to perpetuate the dominance of one group over another, and to provide a means of removing groups of people whose loyalty to the state is doubtful. In many situations ranging from the Balkans to Central Asia, population displacement has become the cause of warfare among states. Scenario in South Asia not different from other regions of the world, all the states in the region are multi-ethnic in their composition and consist of large number of refugees as part

of its population. This fact is evident from the Table 2.1 given below:

Table 2.1*
Profile of Refugees in South Asia

Sr.No.	Country	No. of refugees	Types of Refugees
1.	Bangladesh	95,000	Biharis: 238,000 Chakma: 50,000 Chin & Arakanese: 3,000
2.	Bhutan	1,30,000	Indian :20,000 Nepalese: 1,10,000
3.	India	2,92,000	Afghanistan: 16,000 Bhutanese: 30,000 Burmese student leaders: 300 Chakmas: 65,000 Chin People (Myanmar): 50,000 Sri Lankan: 1,10,000 Tibetan: 1,10,000 Other countries: 700
4.	Nepal	146,600	Bhutanese: 96,300 (in camps) Approx. 20,000 outside camps Tibetan: 30,000 Few hundred from other countries
5.	Pakistan	12, 30,000	Afghan: 12,20,000 Kashmiris: 15,000 Somalia: 900 Iraq: 900 Iran: 500 Other: 2,400 Fresh arrival in 1998 after US air attack: 20,000
6.	Sri Lanka	2,75,000	India: 2,00,000 Nepal: 5,000 Abroad: 70,000 (Europe, North America) Internal Displacement: 1,00,000

***Source:** *Refugee Watch*, Special Coverage on South Asia, (INHURED International), Lalitpur, Nepal, pp. 11, 12. 1996 and *UNHCR Report 1999* and Norbu Dawa, "Tibetan Refugees in South Asia", S.D.Muni and Lok Raj Baral, ed., *Refugees and Regional Security in South Asia*, Konark, Delhi, 1996, p 79; and Gopal Krishna Siwakoti, *Demystification of the Hypothesis of Ethnic Conflict and Alternative Regime for Refugee Protection South Asia*, Pacific Western University, 1998, Vols. 1 and 2, page 175-76.

Note:- The following statistics represents situation in June 2000. The data presented below are approximate but verifiable, cross-checkable and factual.

From the above table it can be discerned that South Asia is circumscribed with the problem of refugees in a significant manner. Consequently these states have to devise some strategies or regulations to handle this grim scenario. Though general policies of these countries are quite flexible and accommodating towards the victims of forced migrations, yet the countries of South Asia are not the party to the UN Convention on Refugees and its Protocol. As compared to the developed countries of the world, South Asian states have adopted very soft policies on entry of asylum seekers. The states have also provided shelter and other humanitarian reliefs to different kinds of victims of forced migration, including victims of natural disaster, people fleeing generalised violence, abuse of human rights communal and ethnic strife and even the victims of man made ecological disasters. In fact there are very few instances where asylum seekers have been blocked and refused entry into a South Asian state.

South Asian states have followed differentiated policies towards different groups of refugees or asylum seekers. While a state might welcome some groups of asylum seekers, it may not be receptive or kind to others. The powers to grant residential permits have been relegated to administrators at district and sub-district levels who can grant or revoke these certificates at their discretion. These policies have been dictated by the politics of kinship and inter-state relations. Experience shows that there is no consistency in admissions, grant of asylum, education, employment, rehabilitation and repatriation. Each influx of refugees receives a different package depending on political motivation and ethnic and religious linkages.

Though the states look upon cross-border migrations as a bilateral issue within the framework of national security, yet the refugee issue has been ignored at the regional level. In the absence of laws concerning treatment of asylum seekers/refugees, the response to refugee influxes remains ad hoc. The refugees have no legal protection against summary expulsions as they are treated as illegal immigrants and not as refugees fleeing persecution. As a result, the UNHCR has not been able to provide effective and meaningful protection to most refugees in the region. Even international humanitarian agencies are often not

allowed to assist refugees in most of these countries. Many of these problems can be avoided both through the enactment of legal norms on entry procedure status and the creation of rights for asylum seekers and refugees.ⁱⁱⁱ A legal framework for the protection of refugees requires: (i) provision to be made for their protection during their refugee status; (ii) finding solutions for their problems; (iii) enabling them to return to their home country; and, (iv) an inter-governmental mechanism at the regional level for protecting the returnees in their home countries.

The refugee's crises in South Asia exhibit certain characteristics which are similar to those found in other regions of the world. Similar to the situation in Africa, South Asian refugees remained within the region and have not sought asylum abroad. The massive refugee outflows from East Pakistan in 1971, for example, sought shelter in neighbouring Indian state. The major exception have been educated classes or minorities with diasporas networks formed by previous immigrants, such as Tamil and Sikhs, who have sought asylum in large numbers in Western Europe and North America.

Unlike many other regions, where external powers were engaged, the conflicts and subsequent refugee crises of South Asia generated little outside interest. During the Cold War, apart from the conflict in Afghanistan, the issues at the roots of most of the region's conflicts and refugee exoduses were not linked to the East-West conflict and rather they marginally affected the broader strategic issues in which the than superpowers were engaged. However, refugee movements in South Asia have become central component of regional conflicts involving local actors. India has repeatedly used refugees as an instrument of foreign and strategic policies towards neighbouring states. In 1971, some scholars have opined that India supported the Bengali refugees from East Pakistan against the Pakistani armed forces by supplying arms, training and political support to the separatists in their bid to breakup Pakistan and to create the new state of Bangladesh.^{iv} Similarly, Indian backing of refugees in Tamil Nadu include support for various militant groups in their separatist struggle in Sri Lanka. In 1987, Indian Peace-Keeping Forces (IPKF) intervened in Sri Lanka which forced the security forces of the latter to temporarily stop their operations against the LTTE. Besides, India has given asylum to Tibetan refugee in 1959, to justify an intervention in Tibet by world community against China. In all these

cases, refugee issues were part of, but clearly subordinate to, the larger geopolitical interests of the India towards this region.

Throughout the developing world, refugees have been created by both internal conflict and the foreign and security policies of local states and their external patrons. This has more particularly true about the situation in Afghanistan during the cold war period. Both superpowers used arms transfer as a means to exploit the existing hostilities and as a vehicle for pursuing their own rivalry. During the 1980's, West tried to achieve its strategic and political interest through pressurizing and destabilizing revolutionary states in the developing world. It was aimed at to raise the cost of its political rival, the erstwhile Soviet Union, though the continued military use of refugees. The emergence of the so called armed groups, i.e. "refugee warrior", symbolized for the West the popular rejection of communist governments and to legitimize the resistance movements. The 3.5 million Afghan refugees, who flee to Pakistan, formed a base for Mujaheddin resistance to erstwhile Soviet Union's supported Afghanistan government. By the late 1990's, about 2 million Afghan returned home from Pakistan, but the continuing conflict in Afghanistan has brought little respite to the indigenous population for whom the difference between proxy war and civil war has been minimal. ^v

Sometimes the cost of interventions in the region and to use refugee as warriors have been extremely high for both the countries of origin and the host states. This is evident from India's intervention in Sri Lanka, which led the politicization of the Tamil Nadu population and assassination of prominent political leader. In Pakistan, a sharp raise in drugs trafficking, proliferation in illegal exports of small arms and ethnic violence have accompanied the influx of Afghan mujaheddin and have seriously destabilized local communities. In both the cases proliferations of lethal weapons and violence have contributed to the spread of militarization in the host counties and intensification and prolongation of ethnic and religious conflicts in both India and Pakistan.

Determinants of Refugee

Emigration and migration are costly affairs, so these are generally not preferred by the people. It occurs only when a high level of threat in the immediate or domestic political

environment makes their stay difficult and option for flee is considered better. On the basis of the migration studies, three main categories of threats to security have been identified : (a) state; (b) dissidents; and, (c) both state and dissidents together.

(a) The State

The state, through both its active and passive activities, can create a threatening environment. In active manners, refugees are identified and made targets of human rights abuses in the state. Besides, increasing number of cases are charged against them and they became target of repressive acts aimed at to pushout unwanted people.^{vi} In these circumstances individuals might consider it better to flee then to face government persecution. This done after voicing their opposition to government and realizing that retribution by the regime is not forthcoming. Besides, when a family member, friend or acquaintance became the victim of government violence, anticipating that they would have a similar fate, others prefer to leave rather than stay.

In each of the above predicaments people hold a common perception that their security is at risk in their country of origin. They realize that their lives could be saved only if they reach some safe destination outside this state. Refugees, therefore, are likely to apt to move away from countries where they perceive their personal security is at risk and will be safer in the countries where they are migrating. Therefore, refugee will tend to move to countries where the basic rights of personal integrity are less threatened.^{vii} The most serious of all human rights abuses, genocide and politicized, are obvious examples of active state behaviour that threatens the personal security of the targeted population.^{viii}

In passive mechanisms state polity plays an important role. Generally an autocratic polity structures might be expected to produce a more threatening environment than democratic polity structures which allow people to participate and express their preferences on government policy.^{ix} Similarly, countries with democratic polity are more likely to attract refugees than those with autocratic polity. Besides, some kinds of changes in polity structure are likely to increase one's perception of threat as well. That is why certain political structures will generally produce less threatening environment as compared to some other. Therefore individuals' perceptions are also formed on the basis of

such environmental considerations. The logic of this decision is based on the assumption that unstable state-societal interactions may lead persons to perceive that their life are being threatened.

Democratic institutions are apt to be associated with fewer refugees leaving and more being accepted. It is expected that the change to democracy from autocracy might usher in a period in which past refugees would return home. A trend toward non-democratic government would be apt to lead persons to feel more threatened and to leave.^x

(b) The dissident

Several refugee situations around the world indicate that not all such situations result from people moving due to fear of persecution by government. Often conflict initiated factions can also lead to reasonable fear for security. In some instances people may foresee a reaction by government as a result of political conflict, or alternatively, they might also fear violence from domestic elements. Persons will tend to leave their own countries when political conflict is high, immigrating to countries where such conflict is at a lower level.^{xi}

Also worthy of consideration as a determinant of refugees are violent separatist movements or movement attempting to overthrow the regime. Such movements often lead to fight, as more persons perceive their security to be at risk as the situation worsens. Though these events are not considered to constitute a civil war, yet the organized violent rebellions lead to refugee flight. Therefore, it is expected that refugees will tend to flee their countries when such violence is serious in favour of areas where such movements are not present.^{xii}

(c) State-Dissident Interaction

Most threatening situations arise only where both the state and dissident groups are involved in a conflict. Civil warfare frequently leads persons to perceive a threat to their physical integrity. This follows directly from the arguments above that civil wars are strongly and positively associated with refugee movements.^{xiii} The reason behind that association is the impact that these conflicts have on individual's perception of their

security. Generally refugees will tend to move from states participating in such wars to countries that are not.

The presence of hostile environment implies a threat to the integrity of the person raises the probability that individuals will abandon their homes and become refugees. Yet, other factor may also influence the decision. The theoretical and empirical literature on refugee movements and migration to identify other variables might vary with refugee flows. Many scholars have argued that refugees' decisions to flee are driven, at least partially, by conditions of poverty in their home countries.^{xiv} Indeed, some recent analysts have taken for granted a linkage between poverty and refugee movements, as they advocate "sweetening" economic condition in "sending countries" as a way of dealing with the problem.^{xv}

Refugee Flow in South Asia

Theoretically speaking, three broad categories of factors responsible for creation of refugees can be identified in South Asia.^{xvi}

(i) In the *first place*, the breakdown of colonial rule and the rationalization of some of the colonial legacies created refugee flows. The largest of such flows, as mentioned earlier, was between India and Pakistan, resulting from the partition of British India which gave birth to the new state of Pakistan on the basis of religion. As a result, not only the Muslims of North India migrated to the newly created state but also the consequent communal frenzy pushed the Hindu residents of the newly created Pakistan to migrate to the truncated India. This process of migration continued for nearly a decade, though the largest migrations took place in the first two years of partition, i.e. 1947 and 1948. No precise estimate of the exact number of people involved in these flows is available, but flows from both the directions put together, would not have been less than 20 million. The problems of their resettlement and rehabilitation were enormous but both India and Pakistan sorted them out administratively, within their own respective jurisdictions, as also through bilateral negotiations.

Decolonization process in South Asia also generated flow of refugees in the region in some other ways as well. Burma (presently Myanmar) and Sri Lanka (then Ceylon) were granted independence from British rule in 1948. Soon after this Myanmar started a

vigorous process of nationalizing its administration and public sector institutions, where a large number of the persons of Indian origin, who had migrated to Myanmar under the British patronage, were employed. All these Indians were pushed out of their jobs and deprived them from citizenship; hence they migrated to India as refugees.^{xvii} Again sent refugees to India after the dismissal of U. Nu's democratic regime and the establishment of military rule by Gen. Ne Win in 1962. Large number of Indians were pushed out of the country. The military rule nationalized various economic establishments, depriving sources of livelihood to many persons of Indian origin, who were working as middle-men and money lenders since the British times, The Indian government's disapproval of the military rule in Myanmar had made the Rangoon rulers harsh towards these Indians whose position then became further vulnerable. An estimated 150,000 of such refugees returned to India where they had their roots.^{xviii}

Like Myanmar, Sri Lanka also had a large population of the persons of Indian origin, employed in the estate sector since the British days. The nationalist government of Sri Lanka, through newly introduced citizenship Acts in 1948 and 1949, deprived these estate workers of their voting rights. As a result, a new category of 'stateless Indian's emerged in Sri Lanka, which neither India, nor Sri Lanka wanted to own. Several attempts to resolve the problem of the persons of Indian origin in Sri. Lanka failed to yield results. The two countries signed their first major agreement on the question of the 'stateless' persons in 1964, which was been revised and improved in the light of new problems of implementation. Under various agreements India received nearly 338,000 persons of Indian origin from Sri Lanka for resettlement and rehabilitation between 1964 and 1987.^{xix} The last agreement to deal with the residual problem was concluded between the two countries in May 1987 and it was hoped that complete implementation of this agreement may finally eliminate this irritant between the two neighbours.

(ii) The *second* factor responsible for generating refugees in South Asia has been related to state and nation-building processes which precipitated not only political, ethnic and religious conflicts but created economic and environmental conditions that forced people to migrate within or outside their respective countries. The first and also the largest refugee flow generated in this category was in 1971, i.e. from the than East Pakistan to India. Pakistan could not resolve the problem of alienation of its Bengali population

because the Punjabi and West Pakistani dominated State was not willing to accommodate the Bengali majority for its due share in power structure; not even after the first democratically held elections of 1970, in which the East Pakistan based Awami League of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had secured majority of seats. Pakistan's internal conflict that resulted from the military's refusal to hand over power to the elected parliament and, instead, let loose repression on the Awami League and the Bengali masses made the emergence of Bangladesh as a new and independent nation in December 1971.^{xx}

As a consequence of the emergence of Bangladesh, another category of refugees was created, of those 'stranded Pakistanis' who had refused to support the struggle for Bangladesh, and even after the victory of this struggle, continue to proclaim their allegiance to Pakistan. Under an agreement concluded in 1974, Pakistan accepted about 170,000 of these people, popularly known as 'Bihari Muslims'. But more than 300,000 remain stranded in Bangladesh awaiting their repatriation to Pakistan. Pakistan is not willing to accept and rehabilitate them.^{xxi}

An important aspect of the state and nation-building process in South Asia has been the changing identity of the State and its consequent precipitation of religious, ethnic and sectarian conflicts.^{xxii} In the beginning, all the South Asian states started with liberal, democratic and secular ideals, but gradually, they drifted into acquiring the identities of their respective dominant and governing social groups. This process and its culmination in the emergence of a majoritarian and domineering state which was also undemocratic, has inflicted discrimination, deprivation and marginalization on the minority, ethnic and religious groups. The dominant community or the social group in control of the state has used undemocratic political structures and the state's coercive apparatus to appropriate disproportionate share of the state's resources for itself, denying the same to their minorities and out groups. This has precipitated ethnic conflicts and generated refugees.^{xxiii} This distorted state-building process has been reinforced by the challenge of under or unequal development.

In a way, the Bangladesh crisis in Pakistan was a result of this process. Similar has been the case of Tamils in Sri Lanka, where the state, through a gradual process beginning in 1956, acquired a Sinhala-Buddhist identity. The simmering ethnic conflict that exploded in July 1983 sent more than 220,000 refugees to India and nearly 75,000 refugees outside

the region, i.e., to Europe, America. Canada and Australia. Half of the Sri Lankan refugees in India were sent back following the conclusion of the Indo-Sri Lankan Agreement in July 1987, and subsequently through the good offices of the UNHCR. India's former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's assassination in Tamil Nadu in May 1991, suspected to be an act of the Sri Lankan Tamil extremist group the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Elam (LTTE), expedited the return of Sri Lankan refugees. However, the Sri Lankan ethnic conflict is still far from being resolved and the remaining refugees find it extremely hard to return voluntarily. Most of the Western governments are also keen to see the return of Tamil refugees back to Sri Lanka but collapse of the peace process initiated by President Chandrika Kumaratunga and the out-break of Eelam War-III in April 1995 make this task all the more difficult. Sri Lanka's ethnic conflict has also generated at least more than 600,000 internal refugees according to an official Sri Lankan estimate in August 1993. Sri Lankan Government had amended the Citizenship Act in September 2007 to enable persons of Indian origin who left for India as refugees to obtain Sri Lankan citizenship easily. The amendments will benefit 28,500 'Sri Lankan of Indian Origin' now living in Tamil Nadu refugee camps as stateless citizens.^{xxiv}

The newly created state of Bangladesh had imbibed the ideals of democracy and secularism but after the *coup* against the first representative government in 1975, a drift towards authoritarian political order and assertive Islamic identity became evident. This strengthened the traditional flow of Hindu refugees from Bangladesh to the Indian state of Assam. For instance, between 1971 and 1981, an estimated 1.8 million Hindus had migrated from Bangladesh to India, suddenly increasing demographic pressures in Assam and created a conflict situation between the Assamese and Bengalis. The changing character of the state of Bangladesh further increased the alienation of Buddhist Chakmas, the tribal inhabitants of Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) of Bangladesh, and intensified their fight for autonomy and cultural, political and economic rights with the Dhaka regime. The conflict in CHT resulted in more than 50,000 Chakma refugees landing in India. The prospect of their return to Bangladesh has increased following an understanding to that effect arrived at in June 1995 between the India and Bangladesh governments. However, hopes that this understanding will not be vitiated by the realities on ground as has been the

case with all the previous arrangements worked out on the Chakma issue between New Delhi and Dhaka.

Bhutan has been a monarchy and dominated by the Buddhist Drukpas. The Southern Bhutanese, mostly of Nepali origin, who migrated from India and Nepal over the years, not only lived under restrictions of movement and residence, but also were denied due share in the political and economic decision making of the kingdom. This was mainly due to the fears of the dominant Drukpa community that demographic expansion of Nepalese would eventually lead to their marginalization with the kingdom. The conditions of the Southern Bhutanese of Nepali origin, further deteriorated when rigorous policies of Bhutanisation, through the imposition of cultural and dress code (*Driglam-namza*) as well as citizenship qualifications, were carried out in 1988. Repressive implementation of these policies precipitated violent reactions, conflict and refugees.^{xxv} Ethnic conflict in Southern Bhutan also carries political overtones, where as the Nepali resistance, besides demanding protection of their human rights, also claim to be struggling for the establishment of democracy.^{xxvi} As a result of this conflict, more than 100,000 refugees have left Bhutan to seek asylum outside. Approximately 85,000 persons, have gone to eastern Nepal where they are kept in camps supported by the UNHCR. An estimated 25,000 to 30,000 Nepalese of Bhutan have taken refuge in India's state of West Bengal and Assam. But India remained quiet on this small number, while Nepal has been trying through various diplomatic means to persuade Bhutan to take the refugees back. Bhutan is not responding to Nepal's initiatives and asserts that before the question of repatriating any of these refugees to Bhutan is considered, it is necessary to ensure, that they are citizens of Bhutan. The problem of the refugees has been that many of them were not given citizenship documents and were pushed out of their dwellings in Bhutan through state repression.

The South Asian states that have not generated major refugee flows to their neighbouring countries are India, Nepal and Maldives. In case of India, its democratic polity, secular state and federal constitutional structure, notwithstanding their respective limitations and imperfect practices, has given it considerable resilience to deal with ethnic conflict internally. The examples of Tamil, Assamese, Punjabi and North-Eastern ethnic conflict may be mentioned. These conflicts have not been fully resolved, but the capacities of the state system and the large size and diversity of India has enabled it to keep them moderate and localized. In recent times, however, serious erosion in India's democratic

polity has been witnessed and impact of this erosion is clearly evident in the rise of ethnic, communal and caste tensions.^{xxvii}

As for as Nepal is concerned, its Hindu identity has been far less assertive as compared to the rise of sectarianism in other South Asian countries. In addition to this, the religious and cultural alienation of minorities in Nepal has produced only limited and local ethnic conflicts, partly because there were other cushions available, like the selective co-option of minority representation by the monarchical-state and partly due to the undemocratic character of the Panchayat political order, which did not allow any political mobilization at the grass-root level or along divisive identities. The establishment of parliamentary democracy under constitutional monarchy in 1990 has stimulated such mobilization, including ethnic, regional and religious-minority grievances, which if not attended properly may become major problems in the coming years. It is well argued that while, democratization provides a polity with greater resilience to resolve social problems, it also creates conditions for political mobilization and articulation of social and economic grievances.^{xxviii} Maldives is a very small island state with considerable socio-cultural homogeneity character. Therefore, it is free from ethnic and internal political conflict. For instance, the *coup* attempt on President Gayoom's regime neither involved the ordinary Maldivian, nor forced him to become a refugee.

The South Asian states' incapacity to deal with the challenge of economic development has also been one of the reason for refugee. This incapacity has generated economic and environmental migration in the region. Bangladesh is identified as one of the largest and continuous source of economic migrants, going mostly to India, but also spilling-over into Nepal. Bangladesh's poor economy, fast growing population and pressure on land seem to have encouraged such migration, most of which emanate from the Bangladeshi district bordering India, such as Mymensingh. No reliable account of the dimension of this migration is available since it has been continuing even during the days of East Pakistan. According to one Western estimate, the number of Bangladeshi Hindus and Muslims coming between 1971 and 1981 to India's Assam state as illegal economic migrants was nearly two million.^{xxix} Indian estimates put the overall number of these migrants at 13 million.^{xxx} The government of Bangladesh has neither formally accepted the fact of economic migration nor that they have any responsibility in the matter. The Indian government continues to resent this but has not been able to do any thing in the matter.

India's inability is also caused by its weak political and administrative system, where the border guards (the Border Security Force) let the migrants go for small gratification and the local politicians in Assam and West Bengal have connived at the presence of the migrants for using them as vote banks in the areas where the migrants come and settle. India's attempts to find out other means to check this migration like the proposed barbed wire fencing along the border and "Operation Push-back" (to humiliate and send some of the migrants back) have hardly been of any avail.

Economic migrants have also frequently crossed the Indo-Nepal border in large numbers, from both the sides. Not only this border is contiguous and long, but it permits free movement of the nationals of one country into the other under the provisions of the Treaty of Peace and Friendship of 1950, between them. The Treaty also ensures 'national treatment' on 'reciprocal basis' for Indians and Nepalese in each other's territories. Such provisions have encouraged and facilitated economic migration. Under development and deforestation of Nepal's hilly-regions have traditionally forced Nepalese to seek economic opportunities in Terai region as also in the vast Indian labour market. A sizable concentration of the Indian nationals of Nepali cultural stock have provided initial contacts and liaison to these Nepali economic migrants to India. There is no reliable account of these migrants available but estimates vary from 5 to 6 millions since India's independence. During the Assam agitation against foreigners, besides Bangladeshi, Nepalese also became point of contention.

The flow of economic migrants from India has been stimulated as a result of modernization and development in Nepal which has been generating demands for skilled and semi-skilled workers. Indians have also gone to Nepal for teaching jobs and for setting-up small and medium sized business establishments. Marked by the growing flow of Indians into Nepal, the Nepali government set-up a Task Force in 1982-83 to look into the problem. Though the recommendations of this Task Force could not be implemented due to political pressures and practical difficulties, but the government has continued to threaten to impose condition of 'work permits' for the Indians. In the mid-eighties the Nepali government also undertook a crude 'push-back' operation to deter Indian economic migration, but could not achieve much. There is an estimated strength of about four million persons of recent Indian origin are working in Nepal but many of them have lived long

enough to obtain or aspire for Nepali citizenship, many of their counterparts have succeeded in getting citizenship.

(iii) In the *third category* refugee are related to the developments outside the region. So far, such refugees have come from Tibet, Afghanistan and Myanmar. The flow of Tibetan refugees into South Asia has been the result of communist China's military action in Tibet during the fifties. The Tibetan struggle for autonomy and the Chinese action to suppress that struggle have continued since then and so has been the flow of refugees. The intensity of this flow has varied, depending upon the intensity of conflict in Tibet, which was most serious in 1959, when Dalai Lama, the religious and political leader of the Tibetans, with thousands of his followers, came to India for asylum. Subsequently, Tibetan refugees have come to South Asia during the second half of the sixties when the cultural revolution in China caused extensive disturbances. Since 1988-89, Tibet's struggle for autonomy has picked up momentum again, generating more refugees. The question Tibetan refugees in South Asia may attain focus as the issue of Tibetan autonomy gains momentum in view of renewed international support.

There are nearly 133,000 Tibetan refugees in South Asia, dispersed in different countries: India -119,000 and Nepal-14,000.^{xxxii} Tibetan refugees initially came to India, Nepal and Bhutan, because their geographic proximity and cultural identity. However, internal political pressures and considerations of China's displeasure have affected the attitude of the host South Asian countries towards these refugees. In the latter half of the eighties, the government of Bhutan asked them to leave the kingdom. This was the end of simmering suspicion since the beginning of the seventies in Bhutan's ruling circles as Tibetans were considered involved in political conspiracies. In Nepal also the attitude towards Tibetan refugees start changing since 1974, when the Tibetan Khampas were asked to stop their armed operations against the Chinese authorities in Tibet. In recent years, the government of Nepal's attitude towards the Tibetan refugees has hardened, where instances of forcible repatriation of the refugees and forcible prevention of new, incoming genuine refugees have been reported.^{xxxiii} In India also, Rajiv Gandhi's assurances to the Chinese leaders during his state visit to China in December 1988 that the Dalai Lama and his associates would not be allowed to indulge in political activities against China were resented by the Tibetans. Demonstrations by these refugee against the Chinese Premier Li Peng during his visit to India in December 1991 were treated highly

and there have been instances of clashes between the Tibetan refugees and local inhabitants in 1994 in Himachal Pradesh. The presence of Tibetan refugees in India may continue to be there, but their political fate and prospects of repatriation are closely linked to the changing dynamics of the Tibetan question and improvement in the Sino-Indian relations.

The Afghan refugees started coming into South Asia following the Saur revolution of Afghanistan in 1978 and the far-reaching socio-economic changes introduced by the Taraki regime. Within a year and a half, the Taraki regime was over-thrown by Hafizullah Amin in September 1979, who in turn was removed by the erstwhile Soviet military intervention in December 1979. Between April 1978 and December 1979, an estimated 193,000 refugees came to Pakistan to seek asylum.^{xxxiii} The flow of refugees became much too large following the former Soviet Union's intervention and the Afghan resistance to it. By the beginning of the eighties, there were about 4700 Afghan refugees entering Pakistan every day, contributing to a total of 3.15 million registered refugees at their peak in October 1987.^{xxxiv}

Nearly half of the total refugees returned to Pakistan following the erstwhile Soviet withdrawal. The renewed conflict in Afghanistan, however, has not only slowed down the rate of repatriation, from 910,000 in 1992 to 358,000 in 1993. But with a new influx, number of Afghan refugees in Pakistan remained as 1.5 million.^{xxxv} The conflict resulting from the internal power struggle among the former Mujahideen groups has been further intensified in Afghanistan. Since Pakistan continues to play a role in influencing this struggle, it cannot avoid being a host to Afghan victims of internal war. Many of the Afghan refugees who have established themselves economically in the Frontier Province and Baluchistan over the past decade may not even be willing to go back to an economically devastated Afghanistan. Pakistan's attempt to encourage a new militant force in the name of Taliban to stabilise the political situation in Afghanistan has not yet yielded desired results. Some 25,000 Afghan refugees have also been living in India since the early eighties. These refugees, however, did not belong to the erstwhile Afghan resistance groups, and are therefore, likely to continue to be in India until lasting peace and harmony is established in Afghanistan.

Myanmar has been the third extra-regional source of refugees to South Asia. The flight of the persons of Indian origin from Myanmar during 1948-49, and during the early

sixties have already been noted. Burma has also sent Rohingya Muslim refugees to Bangladesh. The first flow of such refugees came in 1978, in the wake of the Myanmar army's operations in the Arakan region to check illegal migrants and fight insurgency. As many as 200,000 Rohingyas then sought asylum in Bangladesh as they did not have valid citizenship documents and were afraid of the Army of Myanmar. Later an agreement was worked out between Bangladesh and Myanmar, with the mediation of UNHCR to repatriate these refugees, many of whom had already left for Muslim countries in West Asia. The recent flow of Rohingyas to Bangladesh started during 1989-90, when in their pursuit to suppress democratic movement and ethnic insurgences, the Burmese military regime confronted Rohingyas, cleared them from their villages to establish military bases and forced them to provide 'unpaid labour' to the troops.^{xxxvi} The number of Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh reached at about 300,000 by 1992, when the governments in Rangoon and Dhaka concluded an agreement for the repatriation of these refugees. The continuing fear of army excesses has deterred the Rohingyas from returning voluntarily. By the end of 1993, nearly 200,000 Rohingyas were still living in Bangladesh refugee camps.^{xxxvii} In 1994, the Myanmar government again assured to create conditions for the smooth return of the refugees with the help of UNHCR and it was hoped that the problem would be resolved in due course of time.

If question of refugees in South Asia is analysed in a comparative context, it is found that formation and restructuring of state boundaries (partition of British India, and the emergence of Bangladesh) and the explosion of internal ethnic and secessionist wars have created exodus of refugees. Massive military operations like the, (emergence of Bangladesh, struggle for a separate Tamil Eelam in Sri Lanka, and Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan), have also create mass exodus of refugees in the shortest possible span of time. Economic and environmental migration have generally contributed toward this process with a slow pace, but the total number of people involved in this method were also not small, as movement in India, Nepal and Bangladesh suggest.

Two factors that facilitate the movement of refugees are the easy accessibility of the borders to be crossed and the socio-cultural identity of asylum seekers with the host population. Both these factors were decisive in the flight of East-Pakistan/Bangladesh refugees to India in 1971, Afghan refugees to Pakistan in the early eighties and Sri Lankan Tamil refugees to India during 1983-87 period. If the host people and the government

support political cause of the refugees, as was evident in all these cases, then the refugees spread out in the host country faster and deeper, Repatriation of refugees has diverse and complex aspects, but what seems to be borne out by the South Asian experience is that sooner the cause of refugee creation is removed, the faster and easier is their repatriation. The dissociation of the host country from the political cause of the refugees also helps in their early repatriation, and some times, international agencies like the UNHCR and NGO's dealing with the refugees may help instill a sense of confidence and security among the returning refugees to facilitate their repatriation. The role of the UNHCR in the case of Rohingyas of Burma and Tamils of Sri Lanka may be mentioned in this regard.

Implications of Refugee Problem

Refugees are of the problem created by another country which suddenly become the problem of one's own. The extra legal crossing of the people from one country to another usually affects foreign relations, thereby drawing the attention of other countries with interests in the region. Influence on a host country's policy making process becomes evident from two sources (i) the international refugee regime; and, (ii) bilateral relations with the sending countries.

(i) The international refugee regime influences host governments for both practical and normative reasons. Practically, international assistance increases a country's ability to accept refugees by providing financial assistance, stimulating domestic markets and creating infrastructure (wells, clinics, road) when refugee camps are constructed. For instance, the cost of refugee relief in Pakistan in the mid-1980 was about one million dollars a day, all of which was financed by contributions from various countries through UNHCR and private voluntary organizations. Donor countries encourage favourable treatment of refugees by promising or threatening to withhold bilateral aid or "earmarked" contributions to UNHCR. The provision of assistance (and the threat of reducing it) means UNHCR carries some influence with the host country. On receiving a host country's request for assistance, UNHCR sets standard for the operation and assumes role of watch

dog agency. This is intended to ensure that UNHCR will influence decisions made by those executing the relief programme.^{xxxviii}

At the normative level, the threat of bad international publicity is used by refugee organizations to pressurizing host governments toward more positive refugee policies. Most countries are desirous to be in good international standing and do not wish to appear inhumane. Hence the publicity given to refugee abuses is a political consideration shaping their responses.

Although the influence of UNHCR is limited through political and financial constraints, in most cases the UNHCR office in a particular host country is more capable of financing and managing a response to a mass influx than is the host country. Faced with a refugee influx, the capacity of many host countries “to make and execute decisions, to frame objections and requests and to bring knowledge to bear” is limited.^{xxxix} These institutional limitation and weakness gives the better financed and more experienced UNHCR and other refugee organizations an advantage at the initial stages of the influx and limits the host country’s ability to resist their pressure.

Thus, the need for assistance, the avoidance of negative publicity, and institutional weakness all influence the decisions of the host country towards interaction with the international refugee regime. As a result, they pressurizes the country towards more positive refugee policies and practices.

(ii) Relations with sending countries influence the host government’s refugee policy decisions. It is demonstrated by the fact that most countries accord asylum to applicants depending on country of their origin.^{xl} Sending and receiving countries can manipulate refugee flows so as to embarrass or pressurize each other. Sending countries create or condone refugee flows for a number of reasons: to destabilize the receiving country, to force recognition of the sending country, or to stop interference by the receiving country in sending country’s affairs.

In turn, host governments can adopt policies toward refugees that are intended to embarrass to friendly sending countries or prevent embarrassment to friendly sending countries. The bestowal of refugee status upon asylum seekers implies that the sending government persecutes its people, and a host government may not wish to implicate at all in this way.^{xli}

However, relations between sending and recipient countries do not always predict the treatment of refugees once they are admitted. Refugees fleeing a country which has traditionally been an enemy of the receiving country may be treated with the hostility directed towards all natives of that country. A host country at war with the sending country may admit refugees (a positive policy step), only to use them in its conflict with the sending country (a clear violation of U.N. recommendations).

The influx of refugees affects both the domestic and foreign policy of the host country. Its domestic policy is more constrained in terms of host country's absorbing capacity; whereas foreign policy influences could be related to the security dimension of the host country.

(I) Domestic Implications

Impact of refugees on the domestic policy could be visualized in terms of host country's absorption capacity of the refugees. Local absorption capacity is largely determined by two variables (a) economic capacity and (b) social receptiveness. Both of these variables change over time, so a community's absorption capacity is never static.

(a) Economic conditions work as the major determinant of a receiving country's migration policies.^{xlii} Some refugee policy analysts argue that negative policy responses have coincided with periods of economic decline, and in many Western countries during the past century; economic considerations have affected government decisions about resettlement and the definition of refugees.^{xliii}

The Economic capacity of the host country to absorb refugees is determined by land availability, the carrying capacity of the land, employment patterns, and infrastructure. A refugee influx affects both land availability and the quality of the land by creating or aggravating shortages of land, water and firewood and by straining the ecosystem.^{xliv} Land availability also decreases when the government appropriates it for refugee camps. Where refugees are self settled, i.e., they are not restricted to camps, they can impose strains on medical, educational, municipal facilities, housing, and on jobs. These strains frequently result in service breakdowns, increased hardship for local people, and indigenous population's local resentment towards refugees.^{xlv}

High economic capacity enables a community to cope with the resource demands in the form of agriculture skills, labour and capital imposed by refugees. However the entire community seldom benefits from these contributions. Those who are more affluent and visible are more likely to be benefited from an influx than those who are poor more dispersed, and vulnerable displacement by refugees.

Economic capacity is not a static variable. Land capacity and infrastructure can be augmented as a result of the presence of refugees, either through their contribution to production or as a result of international assistance. Assistance programme bring in scarce resources (food, medical supplies), create infrastructure, and provide economic opportunities. Local markets are stimulated when food is purchased for refugees by international agencies. Refugees can thus be seen to contribute to a community's economic capacity by virtue of the international assistance that accompanies them.

(II) Implications on Foreign Policy

The refugee problem has its external dimension as well by way influencing the security of the host country. Here security integrates the traditional and revisionist outlooks as it has been visualized in terms of three dimensions: strategic, regime and structure. The strategic dimension incorporates the traditional view of security i.e. the ability of the state to defend itself militarily from external aggression. The regime dimension is the capacity of the government to protect itself from internal threats arising from domestic disorder and conflict. The structural dimension addresses the balance between a state's population and its resource endowments (food, water, living space). This balance is upset when population demands on resources become too great and the government is unable to manage or contain them. Decreased structural security leads to a "crumbling" of the state and threats to regime security.

A refugee influx potentially threatens all three security dimensions of his countries, either by creating new security threats or by aggravating existing ones.^{xlvi} The situation can becomes more grave with a power imbalance between the sending and receiving country. Armed attacks against refugees are also perpetrated by surrogate militia or political groups within the asylum country. When refugees bring arms with them they create a potentially dangerous armed community. Refugee camps often become violent places with high rates

of crime, especially those where long-term refugee populations, particularly in camps areas away from the mainstream, may develop resentment towards their hosts.

A host government's regime security is threatened when refugees enter on an area characterized by actual or potential ethnic conflict as their arrival may lead to the change in the ethnic composition of those areas. Even if refugees do not actually engage in the domestic quarrels with hosts population, governments often perceive them to be a threat and act to avoid or reduce political repercussions by imposing greater controls on refugees. One widely-practiced strategy is to separate refugees from the local population by housing refugees in camps rather than allowing them to be self settled. Even when there are no potential ethnic problems, governments may prefer to house refugees in camps because by doing so it reduces their political saliency within the local community. Refugees in camps are more easily monitored, controlled, and registered, and also facilitate eventual repatriation. Regime threats also arise through refugees' effect on structural security.^{xlvi} Refugees also create or aggravate discontent among host communities by straining available resources or increasing competition for jobs and land. These strains often give rise to demonstrations, strikes, and riots that threaten the legitimacy of government.

Refugee problems affect security concerns negatively due to several reasons. With increased security threats the army becomes more influential in national affairs. This will reduce accountability of the system towards people as army personnel tend to be more concerned with containing security threats than with the welfare of refugees. Containment frequently means controlling refugees by denying admission, restricting them to camps, or practicing refoulement.^{xlvii} Security threats also make authorities, like police and immigration officials, less likely to admit asylum seekers and more likely to export those admitted. In addition, limits are more likely to be imposed on the activities of international refugee agencies.

Security Implications

Refugees are a product of conflict and insecurity situations, and their presence in a given country, in turn, create, contribute to or exacerbate conflict, tension and insecurity situation. However, the security implications of the refugee phenomenon have only inadequately been explored.^{xlviii} Refugee movements are large scale movements of people and in understanding security implications of such movements, a wider and comprehensive framework of security has to be followed, which incorporates not only the fears and

apprehensions of the individuals and groups but also at the levels of states, regions and international forces.¹ Such a framework must also have reference points in political and military dimensions of security, as also in its economic, administrative and identity aspects.

The security implications of the refugees need to be assessed in relation to the refugee generating (home) state, the refugee receiving (host) state and external aspects of the home and the host state's security. The *home state*, by driving the refugees out, exposes itself to international criticism and embarrassment, pressures, and even intervention, for atrocities on its own people. The two worst cases where the refugees have contributed to the insecurity of the host state in South Asia were that of East Pakistan in 1971 and Sri Lanka in the early eighties. The Bengali refugees from Pakistan in 1971 formed the 'Mukti Bahini', fought against the Pakistani armed forces and facilitated the breakup of Pakistan which created the new and independent state of Bangladesh.

Similarly, the Sri Lankan refugees in India and Western countries activated the Tamil Diaspora outside which created tremendous international pressure on the state not only on the question of human rights violations, but also made it vulnerable to its international donors, demanding an early and peaceful resolution of its ethnic conflict. The Western countries continue to offer them asylum in their territories. Tamil refugees in India included various militant groups which reinforced their separatist struggle in Sri Lanka by exploiting their refugee status. These groups also appealed for and facilitated India's intervention in Sri Lanka in May/June 1987, which forced the Sri Lankan security forces to halt their operations against the Tamil militant groups, and also, consequently accept an agreement with India, which many in Sri Lanka considered as an affront to their sovereignty and national self-respect.ⁱⁱ In both the cases, the critical factor was of course, the support to, and use of the refugees by the host state i.e. India. In case of Bangladesh, its alleged connivance with the process of illegal migration of its nationals to India brought it considerable embarrassment with latter's responses like raising the barbed wire fences to stop such migration. In case of Afghanistan, the refugees have presented an unusual security threat. Those of the Afghan refugees who were heavily armed and extensively trained to offer resistance to the intervening Soviet forces, have now torn the state and the country apart through their internecine struggle for power.

The security implications of the refugees in the *host country* are far-reaching and multi-dimensional. These implications are evident both in relation to internal as well as external security. Regarding internal security, the presence of thousands, rather hundreds of thousands and even millions of refugees create conditions for destabilization and disruption of political, economic and social systems in the host country. The extent and intensity of this internal threat naturally depend upon the number of refugees and their demands and expectations on the one hand and the size, nature and capabilities of the host state on the other. For instances, during their peak phase, the Afghan refugees in Pakistan needed more than US \$1 million even at the rate of '30 cents per capita, per day'.^{lii} Notwithstanding the extent of international support available, the host country has to share this burden in one form or the other. Even making provision of essential commodities to a large alien population may excessively burden economic and administrative capabilities. Countries like India in South Asia have resisted the involvement of outside agencies in the upkeep of refugees, forcing it to bear that burden all by itself.

There are various ways in which the refugees strain the law and order conditions in the host country. The being with, there are conflicts among the refugee groups due to variations in their respective socio-economic strata, regional and clan loyalties, religious and ethnic identities and political and ideological predilections. The variations among Afghan refugee groups in their wealth and ethnic and regional loyalties, and among the Tamil groups of caste, regional and religious identities were well known. These Afghan and Tamil groups not only have undercurrent of tensions among them, but even indulge in open fights and street wars. The armed militant groups among these refugees also fought with each other to establish their respective dominance and leadership of the struggle back home. Tensions and fights among the Afghan refugee leaders like Hekmatyar, Dostum and Masood and among the Tamil refugee leaders like Prabhakaran, Uma Maheshwaran and Padmanabha may be recalled. Such fights killed local people and caused destruction of properties in the areas of refugee settlements.^{liii}

Refugees have also shown the tendency to indulge in petty crimes and thus become a part of the local underworld and criminal groups in the host country. Trafficking in drugs, arms and women has been found to be a common feature of the poorer sections of South Asian refugees, including the Burmese Rohingyas in Bangladesh and the Southern Bhutanese in Nepal and India. Compulsion for doing this has come from their pathetic

living conditions and inability to meet their basic demands from the assistance and support available in the host country. Gun running and drug trafficking has been indulged on a large and dangerous scale by those refugee groups which have used the host country as a sanctuary in their struggle back home. Here again, the afghan and Tamil refugees provide extensive evidence. This gun-running has led to militarization of local population, the consequences of which have been felt for long time. Commenting on the implications of the Afghan conflict on Pakistan it has been rightly observed that, "Pakistan is struggling to cope with the refuge of a Super Power battle; a glut of weapons in the market place, large numbers of restless, combat-experienced foreign guerrillas, millions of Afghan refugees and an unbridled drug trade."^{liv} The contribution of Afghan refugees in spreading large quantities of sophisticated arms in the host society has been sufficiently highlighted even by the Pakistani leadership in the context of growing militancy of Mohajirs in Sindh and the groups in the Frontier Province and Baluchistan.^{lv}

Destabilising impact of refugees is also felt in the host country as a result of tension and conflict between the refugees and the local people. Such conflict emerges from competition for "common property resources" that have to be shared between the refugees and the local citizens in the areas of essential supplies and essential services, health, water, sanitation facilities, power and transport infrastructure and so on. Such facilities cannot be adequately enlarged to meet the demands of thousands and millions of refugees. In addition to this, the refugees compete with the local citizens in the job market, and since they are willing to sell their labour at cheaper rates in desperation, they displace the local citizens from gainful employment. Prosperous sections of refugees even manage to control local business by pushing out the locals. The control of transport network in Peshawar and Sindh by the Afghan refugees in Pakistan is well known.

Resourceful refugee groups get themselves involved in local politics for advancing their political and /or economic objectives. The changing alliances of the Tamil groups with the Tamil Nadu politicians not only intensified the DMK and AIADMK political rivalry, but also contributed to its violent dimensions.^{lvi} The Jamiat-e -Islami and PPP rivalry in Pakistan, with provincial dimensions of politics got involved with the Afghan refugee groups. Similarly, the Nepali economic immigrants and political refugees, at least up to 1975, were involved in the political struggle of Sikkim's integration with India. They were also trapped in the political rivalries among India's Nepali factional politics in North

Bengal and Sikkim areas, adding to the debate and controversy on the relevance and abrogation of the Indo-Nepal Treaty of 1950 which permits and encourages migration across the India-Nepal border. The presence of Bhutanese refugees in Nepal has been exploited by Nepal's mainstream rival political parties, the Nepali Congress and the United Marxist Leninist (UML).

The presence of refugees builds up potential for internal destabilization in the host country is yet another significant and serious way. The presence of ethnic refugees, particularly resulting from ethnic strife in the home country, exacerbates, consolidates and even politicizes ethnic groups in the host country. This happens when ethnic identity of the refugees is different from, as also when it is same as that of the local population. The difference in identity makes the local populations conscious of their own ethnic characteristics and their rights and privileges. They also initiate reactive mobilization in the fear that the presence of an alien ethnic group may "result in the loss of their cultural and political control."^{lvii} This leads to the rise of sub-nationalist and 'sons of the soil' movements that, in the long run may threaten peace and stability in the host country. Disturbances and instability in Assam in reaction to the 'alien' presence of Bangladeshis and Nepalese is a clear example in this regard.^{lviii} This is also evident in the case of Afghan refugees in Pakistan's Frontier Province, but more so when these refugees are moved away from the border areas.^{lix}

In the situations, where there is a similarity in the identities of the refugees and the host country population, the latter tend to imbibe the sense of discrimination and deprivation, express solidarity with the cause of the refugee groups and in turn, their own sense of alienation from the State is stimulated. The case of Sri Lankan refugees in Tamil Nadu provides a typical example of this, where the Tamils of Tamil Nadu have not only exercised considerable pressure on the Indian policy towards Sri Lanka on the question of ethnic conflict so as to make it supportive of the Tamil cause, but have also revived and reinforced their own identity and sub-nationalism.^{lx} This has given rise to concern in India in view of a history of Tamil separatism. The solidarity of the Nepalese towards the refugees from Southern Bhutan in Nepal, and of Bangladeshi Muslims towards the Muslim Rohingyas from Myanmar fall into the same category, though the intensity and the inherent danger of instability in both these cases is much less as compared to the Sri Lankan Tamils' example.

The refugees on their part are seldom happy with the attitude and approach of the host government with regard to their economic opportunity, ethnic identity and 'political approach with the host people become sharper, the refugee groups even turn against the host government and become a source of opposition and embarrassment to the latter. This combined with the resentment of the host population on account of or in relation to, the refugee groups create further difficulties for the host government. The Zia regime in Pakistan lost its credibility and came under strong internal criticism for the consequences of Afghan refugees.^{lxi} Among the groups of Tamil refugees, LTTE turned so much against the Rajiv Gandhi regime in India that they are suspected to be behind his assassination. There are allegations that in this assassination, the LTTE had worked in collaboration with the Punjab and Kashmir extremists.^{lxii} There have also been reports of the LTTE's networking and collaboration, including supply of arms, with other extremist and insurgent groups in India like the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA), Peoples' War Group, and National Socialist Council of Nagaland.^{lxiii}

The refugee movements generate tensions and precipitate conflict between the home states, creating problems of external security. This is particularly so when the refugees actively pursue their armed and / or political struggle against the home state from their sanctuaries and bases in the host country, and they include in them, what has been described as the "refugee warrior community".^{lxiv} Continuation of such struggle activists international borders between the home and the host countries, and results the violation of these borders through armed raids, either by the "refugee warrior community" or by the home state in its endeavour to control such operations through acts of 'hot pursuit', or attacks on the 'rebel' camps and refugee settlement in the neighbouring country.

India as a host country has experienced such tensions, of varying degrees and at various times, with almost all of its neighbours. Such tensions between India and Sri Lanka have been complicated by the unmarked water boundary. A regular irritation between India and Sri Lanka resulting from the latter's naval action against Indian fishermen and fishing boats, allegedly carrying arms and cargoes for the Tamil militants, in the Palk Strait, have been experienced. Pakistan has faced serious violations and threats of the 'hot pursuit' nature from Afghanistan during the Soviet intervention period. Pakistan's borders with India in the Jammu & Kashmir and Punjab sectors have also been, militarily activated by India to stop the flow of armed Sikh and Kashmiri militants and their couriers. In South

Asia, there are also instances of the host country using force and activating borders militarily to stop the flow of refugees. Bangladesh's action against the Rohingyas in 1978 and 1992-93, and Nepal's action against the Tibetan refugees during 1992-93 may be mentioned here.^{lxv} India has also used force on its borders with Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Myanmar, to stopping the flow of refugees, illegal migrants and armed militants.

The border tensions and skirmishes resulting from refugee movements do have a tendency to create conditions for larger international armed conflicts. Generally, refugee movements alone, and the concern to stop such movements and repatriating refugees have not led to the break-out of full scale war between the home and the host states. In South Asia, major bilateral conflicts have taken place with broader in which the refugee factor has been a significant, but not a sole and decisive consideration. For instance, in the 1971 War between India and Pakistan, the question of sending back nearly 10 million refugees weighed heavily on India, but without the strategic considerations of demolishing Pakistan's two-nation theory, eroding Pakistan's military strength, asserting India's pre-eminence and helping Bangladesh to emerge as an independent nation in the larger interest of peace and stability in the sub-continent, India would not have been driven to a full-scale war with Pakistan. Again in the case of Sri Lankan refugees, India's approach to repatriate them was dependent upon the resolution of the ethnic conflict in the island which could ensure justice to Tamils. It was to assert India's strategic and political stakes in Sri Lanka's peace, integrity, stability and non-alignment that India had to commit 'relief-supplies' intervention in Sri-Lanka (May/June 1987), goad Sri Lanka to sign the Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement of July 1987 and send a peace-keeping cum peace-enforcing force to fight with the LTTE.^{lxvi}

Similarly, in case of the Afghan refugees in Pakistan, the question of repatriating them was subordinate to the defeat of Soviet military presence. More than Pakistan, it was the USA that set the agenda, in the context of the renewed cold war, for Pakistan's role in Afghanistan. There were, of course, unrealistic but strong fears and apprehensions, shared by Pakistan that can not be pushed back, Soviet Union was likely to intervene in Pakistan in order to secure a warm water access to the Indian Ocean.^{lxvii} It is unfortunate that developments like the withdrawal of the former Soviet Union from Afghanistan and the end of the cold war have not resolved the conflict in Afghanistan. Consequently only half,

or even less than half, of 3.5 million refugees have been repatriated. It is generally agreed by all concerned that conditions in Afghanistan are frustrating and some of the refugee groups have got so entrenched in Pakistani society, economy and politics, that they may not be able to return to Afghanistan at all.^{lxviii}

Thus from the above analysis it can be discerned that implications of the refugee's movements are a part of wider conflicts at bilateral, regional and global levels. These implications grow in dimensions and complexity when a host state decides to use the refugees as instrument of its policy towards the home state, for political and strategic objectives. Accordingly, the host state not only shares and supports the cause of the refugees, but even provides arms, training and diplomatic support to them as was done by India in case of the East Pakistani and Sri Lankan refugees, and by Pakistan in case of the Afghan refugees. If the political and strategic objectives are strong and compelling, it even goes to war with the home state, along with the 'refugee warrior community'. A number of security implications, both internal and external, of the refugee movements result from this strategic use of the refugees by the host state, either by itself or in collaboration with third countries. We mentioned the role of the USA in Pakistan on the Afghan question. The USA had also trained and armed the Tibetan Khampa refugees in the Mustan region of Nepal bordering China for their raids into the Chinese territory.

The strategic uses of refugees result in spread of arms even beyond the targeted refugee groups. The huge quantities of arms supplied to the Afghan 'freedom fighters' have not only contributed to the militarization of Pakistani society and its ethnic conflicts, but have also spilled over impact to fuel insurgency in Kashmir. Arms and training provided by India to the Tamil militants were not only used against the Indian Peace Keeping Force in Sri Lanka, but also seem to have fallen in the hands of Indian insurgent groups. In the process of using the 'refugee warrior community', the host country cannot avoid alienating some of the member groups of this community, who continue to receive moral and material support from the host, and may become autonomous in their functioning. This defeat the very purpose for which arms and assistance is provided. The attitude of the LTTE vis-à-vis India and of the Afghan Mujahideen groups vis-à-vis Pakistan are illustrative case studies in this respect. It may be useful to draw a comparison here between the roles of Iran and Pakistan in relation to the Afghan refugees. Iran did not

use the Afghan refugees as an instrument in its policy towards the Soviet presence and consequently it has not suffered many of the adverse internal and external security implications that Pakistan had to confront with. Similarly, the post-Rajiv India has avoided getting strategically and politically involved with the Sri Lankan Tamil refugees. As a result, security situation within India and between India and Sri Lanka did not complicated further.

South Asia is a major Third World region of concern in the context of refugee movements. Almost all the refugee generating factors have been active in this region, including the cold war rivalry and conflict in Afghanistan during the eighties, which sent millions of refugees. Among these factors, the processes of state and nation-building that have precipitated internal conflicts in various countries, contributed most to the refugee movements in South Asia. These processes have not able to stabilize the region as movements of refugees continue to confront regional peace and stability.

Refugee problem has led to the serious implications for the internal and external security implications of the refugee problem and the related issues. The most serious of such implications have emanated from the incapability of the countries of the region to manage refugee influx on the one hand and conscious policies, on the part of both the home and the host states to exploit refugee movements for serving their strategic, political and economic interests. Some of the refugee groups, on their part have also not hesitated to abuse the hospitality of the host state and exploit the prevailing tension/ conflict between their home and the host states to further their own objectives. While such policies have led the home and the host states to armed conflicts and even wars, the refugee groups, particularly the large bulk of innocent and politically inactive members, have suffered in various ways. In any serious attempt to deal with the implications of the refugee movements on foreign relations, politically motivated moves and policies will have to be abandoned by the home and the host states as well as the activated refugee groups.

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