

Migration and Sustainable Development SDGs: Examining the Impact of Migration on the Country of Origin (Afghanistan) and Destination (EU Countries)

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Abstract. This article explores the intersection of migration and sustainable development by examining the impact of Afghan migration on the country of origin (Afghanistan) and selected European Union (EU) destination countries through the lens of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Migration is a forward-looking process that is recognized as a transformative factor with the potential to contribute positively to desired development. In the case of Afghanistan, migration has a multifaceted role. First, it has reduced the pressure on the market economy and the infrastructure of the country. Second, remittances sent by migrants not only circulate money but also raise living standards and education. However, unfortunately, the negative side of this phenomenon is also undeniable. The brain drains and the weakening of capacities in all sectors are irreparable. European countries are among the oldest recipients of immigrants. Afghan immigrants are taking place in the education, health, economy, and social sectors in this country. Especially the young immigrants are becoming human capital in all countries of the world. In addition, there are challenges facing both migrants and destination countries, including pressure on the education and health systems and the challenges of integrating migrants and finding suitable jobs in the short term. This article argues, in the light of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, that if there are effective migration policies, valuable achievements can be made towards sustainable development in the countries of origin and host countries, and its negative impacts can be significantly prevented.

Keywords: Migration, Sustainable Development, Afghanistan.

1 Introduction

1.1 Context and Background

“Migration is the movement of persons away from their place of usual residence, either across an international border or within a state” [1]. A migrant is a person who decides to leave their country of birth or the country where they have lived for many years and crosses the borders of their country in the hope of a better life and reaches

their destination country. According to research and reports, the factors of migration are usually divided into political, economic, and social factors, and in recent decades, education has also been considered one of the phenomena that attract migrants [1].

Afghanistan has had the highest number of refugees in the world for the past half century. In addition to the major challenges that have long undermined Afghanistan's internal stability, the climate crisis is also one of the factors that has increased the number of Afghans refugees worldwide. These combined factors have changed the fate of millions of Afghan refugees. They leave their country of origin or the place where they have lived for a long time in search of better living conditions, political stability, a better economy, and better living conditions [2].

Europe has been hosting Afghan refugees for decades. Reasons include the standard of living and relatively lenient rules on accepting refugees, especially for Minors and families, educational opportunities with full government support, a better economy and job opportunities, and guaranteed security are among the reasons that have made Europe an attractive destination for Afghan refugees." According to the reports published by the MoRR in 2020, there are 709,549 Afghan migrants currently living in Europe, which includes refugees and those whose status has not yet been determined [2].

In the contemporary world and in the era of globalization, migration is considered one of the most important and influential phenomena on sustainable development. A better understanding of the importance and impact of migration on host and origin countries re-quires strategic and detailed studies that must be carried out in all social, economic, political, and even environmental dimensions. The long-term consequences of migration not only affect the individual life of the migrant but also have a direct relationship with the resources, capacity, References the economy, politics, environment, and society of both host and origin countries, which requires fundamental research and study [3].

Despite Afghan migrants making up the largest number of migrants in European countries, there is no clear and meaningful understanding of their impact on sustainable development in countries of origin and destination. Immigration policies have not yet been able to properly regulate the amount of sustainable development in countries of origin and destination through migration. As noted by the International Organization for Migrants, there remain significant gaps in policy and research on the role of migrants in achieving the sustainable development goals (SDGs). These gaps require extensive, focused research to better inform and implement migration and development strategies [4].

This study addresses two main research questions: To what extent do Afghan migrants contribute to sustainable development in Afghanistan and the European Union? How can migration policies be designed to minimize negative impacts and maximize positive out-comes for both sending and receiving countries?

This research paper is structured into four sections. The "Introduction" provides the context and background, research questions, and structure of the paper. The "Research Method" shows the type of methodology used to find the information and data. The "Discussion" analyzes the two questions in detail. Finally, the "Conclusion" synthesizes the findings and offers insights.

2 Method

Methodologically, the research employs a qualitative, desk-based approach, relying on secondary sources such as academic literature, peer-reviewed articles, and reports from international organizations such as the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and international human rights law, particularly in relation to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

2.1 Theoretical Framework

Besides using the international legal instruments, it's also using the push-pull theory presented by Everett S. Lee (1966) [5]. This study examines the effects of migration on the country of origin (Afghanistan) and the destination countries (European Union). This theory explains that the pressure factors in the country of origin and the factors of attraction in the destination country shape the migration process. Based on this theoretical framework, various research topics, including the impact of migration on Afghanistan, its impact on European countries, the role of migration in development, the relationship with sustainable development, the relationship with sustainable development goals (SDG 10 and SDG 11), and the negative consequences of migration, are analyzed [5].

3 Result and Discussion

3.1 The Effect of Migration on the Country of Origin, Afghanistan

According to Everett S. Lee's (1966) "push-pull" theory, migration is generally driven by adverse conditions in the country of origin, known as "push factors." In the context of Afghanistan, these push factors—such as protracted conflict, gender inequality, lack of peace and security, lack of economic opportunities, and political instability—have significantly influenced many people's decision to migrate [5].

Immigration from Afghanistan began in the late 1970s. In the early 1980s, most of the immigrants returned after the government came to power. But unfortunately, after the eco-nomic, political, and security instability, the number of immigrants increased significantly. Afghanistan is a country made up of different ethnic groups, including Tajiks, Pash-tuns, Hazaras, Uzbeks, Turkmens, and others. There is no spirit of mutual acceptance, no strong unity, and no political sovereignty. The emergence of terrorist groups that threatened the financial and human security of the people has increased the number of immigrants in the world [4].

Insecurity, war, political instability, the Taliban threat, and authoritarian restrictions are among the key factors driving migration from Afghanistan. According to the European Union (2021, p. 9), forced recruitment by the Taliban has forced many Afghan citizens to leave their homes. Afghans have accepted migration not as a first choice but as a necessity to protect themselves and their families [6].

The people of Afghanistan have long embarked on a dangerous but hopeful journey of migration. With the hope of finding a better life, this process, which has

become a historical pattern, has perhaps not been taken seriously due to its persistence. This has led to it not receiving serious attention from the government or the international community, although annual reports on the statistics of migrants and their fate are published. Most Afghan migrants are young, educated, and desperate young people who did not have any job opportunities in Afghanistan and did not have relative security in their homeland. After arriving in the receiving countries, these migrants enter the work system and immediately work on the development of those countries. The country of Iran has benefited the most from young Afghans and workers.

Workers who perform hard and dangerous construction work for meager wages and lack of insurance. If the current Afghan government cannot dry up the roots that feed migration, such as poverty, insecurity, unemployment, and the lack of an effective education system, in the not-too-distant future Afghanistan will witness an aging population, without specialized personnel, and without the physical and internal capacity to rebuild. As explained by Lee's Push Theory. Unfavorable conditions in Afghanistan continue to push individuals to seek better opportunities [7].

3.2 The Effects of Migration on Destination Countries of the European Union

The Pull Theory states that people are attracted to destination countries for these reasons: better social conditions, more dynamic economies, greater security, environmental factors, and political stability of countries. Within the European Union, these pull factors have played a significant role in shaping migration patterns. As a result, large-scale migration has had significant impacts on destination countries, affecting their labor markets, demo-graphic composition, social infrastructure, and economies.

Europe has become an attractive and desirable destination for various reasons, especially for Afghan migrants. Geographical location, favorable climate, respect and appreciation of human rights, job and educational opportunities, and family support are among the reasons for choosing Europe as a host country for Afghan migrants. Europe has been known as a safe place for Afghan migrants for many years. Most migrants have found the opportunity to achieve their personal and professional goals by migrating to Europe and are now experiencing a desirable life. Although migrants face many problems in Europe in the beginning, this challenge is less for their children, especially children born there who benefit from the rights and privileges of European citizens [8].

"Europe is perceived not only as a place of safety but also as a place where rights are respected and where there is hope for a better future" [9]. War, violence, and instability are not the only factors driving Afghans to Europe. The lack of job opportunities, work opportunities, and especially the repression of minorities such as the Hazaras are the most common reasons for migration. The Hazaras have been subjected to targeted violence, dis-crimination, and human rights violations for many years. They are facing a second wave of violence, discrimination, and deprivation of access to the meager and necessities of life not only in Afghanistan but also in Iran. They are not allowed to work, study, or travel freely within Iran, even those who have been immigrating to Iran for many years and whose children were born there. These

difficult conditions have forced them to take dangerous and uncertain paths to reach Europe. They experience discrimination and lack of access to facilities and are forced to embark on very dangerous paths of smuggling to achieve a desirable and decent life [10].

3.3 The Role of Migrants in Development

Poverty, inequality, insecurity, and lack of job opportunities are among the most important driving factors for families to migrate, factors that push them to find a desirable life and a guaranteed future. Migrants are the assets of their country. They are dear to their country and people, and the loss of each migrant in their country of origin remains forever. Wherever they go, these human capitals strive with greater motivation and effort to build the future they dream of and make the most of the smallest opportunities. Migrants can play an important and valuable role in achieving sustainable development for the reasons.

SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities. This goal emphasizes the reduction of inequalities between countries. Migration can also play an important role in achieving this goal, including the remittances that migrants send to their families, which cause money circulation, reduce poverty, and improve the livelihoods of families. However, if migrants cannot integrate well in the destination country and benefit from the socio-economic services there properly, the opposite can happen, leading to an increase in inequality. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) emphasizes that effective policymaking can significantly reduce the negative effects of migration [11].

SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities. This goal seeks to make cities better quality, more sustainable, more efficient, more secure, and more spacious. The influx of Afghan migrants into urban areas of European Member States has put considerable pressure on urban infrastructure, including housing, education, and health services. To respond to these challenges, governments should continue to build and expand cities by creating new towns adjacent to larger cities, creating better amenities, and developing inclusive educational and training places to consider the needs of migrants. The United Nations emphasizes the achievement of SDGs 11 and believes that cities must adapt to the needs of their populations, including migration, to achieve sustainable development [11].

Migrants have played a significant role in the production cycle of agriculture, and most middle-aged migrants work in this field. The remittances that migrants send to their families not only help to circulate money in the country of origin but also create a living situation and promote micro-investments and financial circulation in their own country. The number of young people studying in destination countries is higher than the previous statistics. They are undoubtedly entering into work and activities in different fields. Especially the children of migrants have achieved the highest grades in their schools [10].

Also, migrant women play a significant role in advancing social and economic affairs in both their countries of origin and destination. Providing safe migration routes and supporting women not only enables them to be employed but also creates a

safe environment where they can enjoy human dignity and women's fair participation in the economy and society, allowing them to contribute to their personal growth and desired development. In fact, many migrants have creative and innovative ideas. If given the right opportunity and context, they can use this idea not only for themselves and their families. It is beneficial for them but also for the host country. United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division [1].

3.4 Introduction to the Negative Impacts of Migration

Brain Drain and its Effects on Countries of Origin. “The emigration of highly educated individuals from developing countries to high-income countries—often referred to as the ‘brain drain’—may have significant effects on the source countries’ economic development. The loss of skilled labor can reduce the quality of institutions, slow down technological progress, and weaken the health and education sectors.”

Pressure on infrastructure in host countries. Migration that occurs in a sustained mass manner in each country brings with it challenges, including pressure on public infrastructure such as education, housing, and health care. Europe has been facing a housing problem for migrants in recent years, which can hinder sustainable development efforts and undermine social support.

Increased Social Inequality. Migrants may face xenophobic discrimination, social exclusion, lack of access to decent jobs, low-paid work and job security, and limited access to social services and healthcare. These can lead to vulnerability and a high level of low-income people in a country that is not sustainable for long-term growth.

Erosion of Cultural and Social Identity. If the sense of belonging to a particular community and country is gradually lost among immigrants, it will not only lead to social disintegration but also to individual isolation and the loss of intellectual and value independence [12].

4 Conclusion

Migration is a human, historical, and enduring phenomenon that has multifaceted political and socioeconomic values that create many opportunities and challenges. If economic programs are implemented, immigrant integration programs and the use of immigrant capacities can be used to grow social development and create countless opportunities. If appropriate opportunities are used and used intelligently, immigrants can play an important role not only in the host country but also in their country of origin.

In the case of Afghanistan, immigrants can, on the one hand, contribute to sustainable development by sending remittances, transferring experience and knowledge, and creating job opportunities by investing and establishing companies and manufacturing plants in their country of origin. On the other hand, losing a young person, brain drain, and the loss of creative ideas and initiatives carried out by young people can cause weakness in achieving sustainable development. In European

destination countries, migrants can become a suitable alternative to the aging generation of workers in European countries and create educational and cultural job opportunities with their ideas and initiatives, but they also increase the pressure on infrastructure and public services. Cooperation between origin and host countries' dialogues creates opportunities with migrants and nationals of the country of origin, investments in the country of origin, and the goal and exchange of ideas and transfer of knowledge to maintain sustainable development to some extent in each country.

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