

RESEARCHING INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT

Working Paper No. 1

Bi-Watan, Bi-Khaaneh: ‘Internal’ Displacement, Afghan Refugees, and the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Abstract

Finding themselves in a country that is not their own, the asylum-seekers and asylees from Afghanistan encountered what may be described as ‘cascading displacement’ as they went about negotiating a series of lockdowns imposed in India because of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Having crossed into India largely on account of the unabating political crises in Afghanistan, the experiences of the Afghan asylum-seekers and asylees demonstrate that (their) displacement did not necessarily end with movement into relatively safer spaces like those offered by India. Instead, cross-border displacement is often accompanied and followed by experiences of internal displacement that occur within the borders of a given nation-state. At the same time, not all experiences of displacement entail a physical movement away from places of familiarity. Instead, some individuals and communities experience effective (legal) and emotional displacement, while being in places where they ordinarily reside. By throwing light on such aspects, this paper highlights the complex, layered reality of cross-border and internal displacement. It argues that it is more than just a (forced) movement away from one’s home region and is instead an experiential condition that is encountered in place both across and within borders. In so doing, this paper uses an emergent methodology called ‘patchwork ethnography’, which combines existing academic literature on displacement with in-situ ethnographic vignettes, and creative and imaginative inputs including the author’s literary flights.

Keywords

Displacement; Afghan refugees; COVID-19; Pandemic; Delhi

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Preface

Home. Ghar. Khaneh. I have had the rare privilege of putting my roots down in one place, without disruption, for the past twenty-eight years. This has not been the case for the thirty-year-old Parwaz from Parwan, Afghanistan,. Maybe it had something to do with his name. Parwaz, after all, means the one who flies and it is this constant state of flight that brought him to India only to find himself *somewhere* but utterly *placeless*. ‘I had come to India when I was not even of age. I was merely seventeen-year-old when I had to pack my things in my school bag and leave not for my school but India’, Parwaz must have said. ‘That bag....It was in black, red and green’, he must have recalled; ‘the colours of the flag of Afghanistan, *watan-e-mann; jaan-e-mann*’. My country, my life.

This Parwaz from Parwan is not real, but he embodies in him the *real, lived and actual* experiences of the many Afghan refugees who I have met and interviewed in New Delhi. He is the same Parwaz who you too might have spotted smartly-dressed in Lajpat Nagar, or around a corner in Tilak Nagar selling the famous *Pakeezah Burger*. His makeshift shop and his fake Puma T-shirt and jeans may not have appeared out-of-place in a city that thrives on informal economy. You may even mistake him for the other *bhaiyya* (brother) who sits in your favourite market, selling street-food. But for that board in white with Urdu-esque Farsi written on it in black (Image 1); his accented Hindi and that longing in his eyes for his homeland, all of which will make you realise that he is not from *here*. *Bi-watan* – ‘(I am a man) without a country’ – his eyes will tell you just like those of my respondents who have had to leave their home/land and travel to India with bags on their back. My Parwaz may not be real, but he is. He lives on in the minds of many refugees, some of whom I have worked with and who have shared with me their stories of leaving their existing lives behind in the hope of starting anew. The black-red-green bag must be real, and so must their love for their country; the same country that they are without today. *Bi-watan*.



Image 1: Makeshift Food Stall Run by an Afghan Refugee in Lajpat Nagar, New Delhi

1. Introduction

The refugee-ness or the condition of being (or becoming) a refugee¹ is marked by experiences of cascading displacements that emerge at the cusp of geopolitics and other socio-spatialities. As I will elaborate below, India's non-accession to the UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (1951) creates social, legal and political challenges that may not necessarily find sufficient resolution in the assistance provided by organisations such as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). In fact, as we shall see, geopolitical diktats have often come to determine both the contours and content of help that may be offered by the Indian state, including, amongst other things, the very right to be considered a refugee on the Indian territory.

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has only made the experiences of displacement even more intense for the Afghan asylum-seekers and asylees, particularly given the absence of definitive policies that make them further vulnerable to administrative adhucism and bureaucratic hyperboles. For that matter, the equation of citizenship rights with 'access to services and support system of the government', as Orendain and Djalante note, has made it difficult for the internal and international displaces to 'receive any financial assistance...and any relief aid'² in these pressing times. The fall of Afghanistan to the Taliban is only expected to compound the challenges faced by the Afghan asylum-seekers and asylees in India for a variety of reasons, including delays in the processing of applications for their resettlement in a third country³.

In view of these intersecting crises, it becomes critical for us to throw light on the complexities of displacement, which is ordinarily understood as a forced movement away from one's home region⁴. In fact, the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, and now the return of the Taliban, have shown that displacement does not necessarily end with crossing international borders and that the internationally displaced often encounter cascading displacements within their host state(s) and which may be understood as internal displacement. By focusing on such aspects, this paper seeks to highlight the complex, layered reality of this phenomenon that, beyond an imposed movement also entails an experiential condition which is encountered in place both across and within borders.

In so doing, this paper uses an emergent methodology called patchwork ethnography, which combines existing academic literature on displacement with in-situ ethnographic vignettes, and creative and imaginative inputs including the author's literary flights. The use of this method is particularly useful in these immobilising times, when gaining physical (and virtual) access to the Afghan refugees has been improbable and, even, ethically suboptimal. By ensuring that we pay more attention to our commitments and constraints as researchers⁵, this methodology can help us further destabilise the conventional practices in/of research by making greater space for dialogue

¹ Cabot, H. 2016. 'Refugee Voices': Tragedy, Ghosts, and the Anthropology of Not Knowing. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 45 (6), 645–672.

² Orendain, D.J.A. and Djalante, R. 2021. Ignored and invisible: internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the face of COVID-19 pandemic. *Sustainability Science*, 16 (1), 337–340., p.338

³ Akhtar, S., 2021. Victims of war : Afghans in India seek resettlement in third country [online]. *Hindustan Times*.

⁴ UNESCO. 2019. *Displacement*. <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/social-and-human-sciences/themes/international-migration/glossary/displaced-person-displacement/>.

⁵ Günel, G., Varma, S., and Watanabe, C., 2020. A Manifesto for Patchwork Ethnography [online]. *Society for Cultural Anthropology*. Available from: <https://culanth.org/fieldsights/a-manifesto-for-patchwork-ethnography%0Ahttps://culanth.org/fieldsights/a-manifesto-for-patchwork-ethnography?fbclid=IwAR3wNRd0EBzQvSyB2GRMtZ3exRP54PgOigIArL3LdE87UJWvRWvEoX3W2Jc>

between the researcher, their research and the researched. At the same time, by challenging the neo-liberal, structural demands for holism, fixity and certainty⁶, patchwork ethnography may allow us to broaden our definitions of field and fieldwork by extending them to different sites and methods, including creative sources such as ethnographically-oriented fiction. As such, by promoting a different way of seeing and approaching our research, patchwork ethnography can provide us with means to create sustained engagements both with and in the field, especially in these trying times.

2. Locked Down and Locked Out

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic has only reinforced the *bi-watani* of real people like my imagined Parwaz. Today, when the borders are still sealed and shut to the outsiders in the quest of protecting one's own, refugees, asylum-seekers, and stateless persons often find themselves repeatedly displaced. The 'complete lockdown of the entire nation'⁷ as the Indian Prime Minister (hereunder PM) had put it almost a year ago, may have been unlocked today. However, neither has the pandemic nor has its repercussions faded out for the refugees who are trying to make their ends meet while trying not to fall sick.

'Despite residing within the perimeters of one country or the other', Saxena notes that 'the political sermons given by the heads of states across the world have rarely taken notice'⁸ of these people. The international response to the pandemic, despite its border-crossing, global proportions is just that: inter-national. It has gone on to show that the supposed global solidarity is essentially a collection of nationalised effort that may not be particularly concerned with those who are devoid of such national allegiances. Much like its Canadian, British and American counterparts, the Indian government's action against the pandemic has been dedicated in the service of its citizens; however uneven it might be. *Mere pyare deshwasiyo* (my beloved country people) chimes in PM Modi every time he addresses the nation. His nation, just like Johnson's nation, or Biden's nation, is composed of its citizens.

The insider/outsider debate could never have been made starker than it is today, playing out across the planet. Maybe the response to the pandemic has been global in that sense - we all have become provincial together. However, the objective here is not to lay the blame at an individual's doorstep. As an erstwhile student of international politics, I have been repeatedly told that the world system, which in Hobbesian words is nasty, brutish and short, precludes the possibility of any meaningful global cooperation from emerging. Hence, I acknowledge and realise that nothing short of a massive upheaval of the inter-national order will create a genuinely cosmopolitan reality where the world becomes my family. This is unlikely to happen any time soon. On the contrary, as Morillas notes:

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ ET Online. 2020. *Full speech: PM Modi announces nationwide lockdown to fight coronavirus pandemic*. March 24. <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/full-speech-pm-modi-announces-nationwide-lockdown-to-fight-coronavirus-pandemic/videoshow/74798169.cms>.

⁸ Saxena, C. 2020. *The COVID-19 Crisis and Afghan Refugees in India*. April 20. <https://casi.sas.upenn.edu/iit/chayanikasaxena2020>.

when human life is threatened, it returns to the centre of everything, and the first reaction is to cling to what we know. We tend to look for references close by and distrust the foreign, the diffuse and the global. We take refuge in our rooting *somewhere*, for a moment setting aside the sense of belonging *anywhere* that inhabits us as globalised beings.⁹

What do then the asylum-seekers, the refugees and the stateless cling on to when they are without that familiar state that I can run back to? Where is that *somewhere* for refugees and asylum-seekers and the stateless who have been locked down with us? I often ponder over these questions, having shifted my privileged self from Singapore to New Delhi just in time as the borders started to close. Unlike me, these refugees, stateless persons and asylum-seekers are not merely locked down. They have been locked out of the inter-national system too, experiencing what may be described as cascading displacement wherein their movement *across* territorial borders comes to generate (lived) experiences of internal displacement *within* the borders of their host nation-state.

3. Refugees in India: another *banvaas* (exile)?

My home/land today plays host to 41,000 mandate refugees¹⁰, or the refugees who are recognised by the UNHCR, and many more asylum-seekers and stateless persons. Their situation is far from being movie-like as that of *Viktor Navroski*, a character played by Tom Hanks in the movie, *The Terminal*. Yet just like him, the refugees in India have been affected by the geopolitics of their time. Let me elaborate on the status of the Afghan refugees here, whose conditions have been the focus of my research for the past four years and who also constitute the second-largest caseload¹¹ with which the UNHCR deals in India.

The seemingly endless conflict and violence in Afghanistan has forced millions to be displaced within and beyond the country. At the height of the Afghan crisis in the 1980s and 1990s, almost 6 million people¹² sought refuge in the neighbouring countries (Iran and Pakistan), with a trickle of this exodus having made its way into India. Arriving in India in different ‘waves’ – an impersonal and homogenising term that glosses over the peculiarities that push people across and between international borders – the refugees from Afghanistan constitute a demographically diverse group. According to latest estimates, some 10,000 Afghan refugees¹³ are currently residing in different parts of the country. An overwhelming majority¹⁴ of people within this group are Sikhs and Hindus, although Muslim and Christian-convert Afghans have also sought refuge in India on various grounds.

⁹ Morillas, P. 2020. *Coronavirus: Between the global and the national*. March.

https://www.cidob.org/en/publications/publication_series/opinion/seguridad_y_politica_mundial/coronavirus_between_the_global_and_the_national.

¹⁰ UNHCR. 2020. *India - Mandate Refugees*. April 1.

<https://reporting.unhcr.org/india#:~:text=In%202019%2C%20India%20will%20be,mostly%20residing%20in%20urban%20areas>.

¹¹ Ibid

¹² UNHCR. 1997. *Refugees Magazine Issue 108 (Afghanistan : the unending crisis) - The biggest caseload in the world*. June 1. <https://www.unhcr.org/publications/refugeemag/3b680fbfc/refugees-magazine-issue-108-afghanistan-unending-crisis-biggest-caseload.html> .

¹³ Anushka. 2019. *Afghan Refugees in India: Key Challenges*. June.

<https://grfdt.com/PublicationDetails.aspx?Type=Articles&TabId=10124> .

¹⁴ Ibid

A non-signatory to the UN Convention on Refugees (1951), India is one of the major global players to remain out of the international refugee regime. It has created a situation of prolonged temporariness for many refugees/asylum-seekers who often find themselves legally¹⁵, socially and economically¹⁶ constrained into seeking a more rooted sense of belongingness elsewhere. However, India is not the only South Asian country that is not a part of this international legal regime. Barring Afghanistan, which, ironically, has been a ‘source’ of refugees for decades, none of the other South Asian countries has signed the 1951 Convention on Refugees. The reasons for such reluctance vary from country to country. For India, it has mostly been a result of geo-historical factors¹⁷, like the lack of international attention and institutional assistance to its Partition-related crisis that led the country to stay away from the 1951 Convention. However, more than 70 years have passed since and the recent debates, spurring on back of the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), have called on the Indian state to accede to the Convention instead of allowing people to refuge selectively¹⁸. As a country that has played host to millions of refugees in its recent past and continues to be a temporary shelter to many, it will be only wise for India to regularise and align itself with the relevant international conventions. It will not only limit the confusion and criticism that are generated on account of its incomprehensive national laws, but it may also help India to address the other developmental, environmental¹⁹, and even national security challenges it currently faces.²⁰

That said, India’s non-accession to the global framework on refugees, asylum-seekers and statelessness does not, however, amount to a total disregard of its international commitments to Universal Declaration of Human Rights amongst other things. India, for instance, has committed itself to Bangkok Principles of 1966 on the issue of non-refoulement, obligating itself not to ‘reject at the frontier, return or expel’²¹ asylum-seekers whose life or freedom might get endangered as a consequence. However, this too has not been without its caveats. Firstly, these principles do not provide comprehensive coverage to all vulnerable groups by failing to mention gender and sexuality-based violence and discrimination, amongst other things, as grounds for non-refoulement. Secondly, the Indian state, just like any other state that is a signatory to these principles, is still determinant of what I describe as the *right of space*. As such, India can reject/return/expel asylum-

¹⁵ Kaur, N. 2013. ‘Protection of Refugees in India: A Critical Analysis.’ SSRN 1-18. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2214274>.

¹⁶ Chandran, Rina. 2018. *Poverty and politics trip up urban refugees in India*. May 11.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-india-refugees-rights/poverty-and-politics-trip-up-urban-refugees-in-india-idUSKBN11C001>.

¹⁷ Manuvie, R. 2019. *Why India is home to millions of refugees but doesn’t have a policy for them*. December 27. <https://theprint.in/opinion/why-india-is-home-to-millions-of-refugees-but-doesnt-have-a-policy-for-them/341301/>.

¹⁸ Dhavan, R. 2019. *India Needs a Proper Refugee Law, Not a CAA Suffused With Discriminatory Intent*. December 20. <https://thewire.in/law/india-needs-a-proper-refugee-law-not-a-caa-suffused-with-discriminatory-intent>.

¹⁹ Poddar, R. ‘The Question Of Climate Refugees: Does India Need A Legal Framework?’. Law School Policy Review & Kautilya Society, 2021. <https://lawschoolpolicyreview.com/2019/07/28/the-question-of-climate-refugees-does-india-need-a-legal-framework/>.

²⁰ Singh, N M, and Sharma, I, ed. ‘Refugee Management A nd National Security Of India’. In National Security Of India And International Law, 9th ed., 91–111. Reprint, Nijhoff: Brill, 2020.

²¹ AALCO. 2001. *Final Text of The AALCO’S 1966 Bangkok Principles on Status and Treatment of Refugees*. June 24. <https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/3de5f2d52.pdf>.

seekers/refugees/stateless persons on account of ‘national security’²² or for being a ‘danger to the community of the country’²³, which only adds to precarious existence of the members of these politically liminal groups.

A more recent Indian commitment to international norms related to refugees has manifested in its ‘endorsement’²⁴ of the Global Compact for Refugees (GCR). However, as the UNHCR notes, India’s support to the refugee/asylum-seekers may continue to ‘remain quite restricted in 2020’²⁵. As a normative framework that seeks to foster international cooperation on matters concerning the refugees, GCR may look like the currently-available best way to create networked support that transcends insulating hierarchies. However, given the rise in restrictions on international mobility, which has not been the doing of the pandemic alone, the global intentions of GCR may not materialise into global actions any time soon. In fact, as countries look inwards to sustain their production chains on their own and become *atmanirbhar* (self-reliant), the impediments to the global flows of people are only likely to create more socio-economic-political tensions in which the refugees, asylum-seekers, and stateless persons will only get caught up further.

The constraining realities of our times once again highlight what Hyndman has described as the ‘geopolitics of migration and mobility’²⁶, which disproportionately affect the refugees, asylum-seekers, and stateless persons by restricting their ability and capacity to move *between* and, at times, *within* the (host) states. Echoing this sentiment, one of my respondents, who is also the Pastor of one of the Afghan Churches in Delhi, had once remarked: ‘I would have been a different person if the Government of India had allowed me to leave. It did not have to be far. Thailand would have been good too.’²⁷

His enforced immobility shows that his displacement from Afghanistan did not render him placeless. Instead, he has become so emplaced that he cannot move out of India. On the other hand, I can travel back and forth between Singapore and India, ostensibly under the protection of my country guaranteed to me by none other than the President of India himself: ‘that the bearer (of the passport) to pass freely without let or hindrance and to afford him/her every assistance and protection of which he/she may stand in need’.²⁸ My blue passport and the Pastor’s maroon one are the same, in essence. Yet, in effect, they are worlds apart.

4. Displacement – An Experiential, Complex Reality

²² Ibid

²³ Ibid

²⁴ UNHCR. 2020. *India - Mandate Refugees*. April 1.

<https://reporting.unhcr.org/india#:~:text=In%202019%2C%20India%20will%20be,mostly%20residing%20in%20urban%20areas.>

²⁵ Ibid

²⁶ Hyndman, J. 2012. ‘The Geopolitics of Migration and Mobility.’ *Geopolitics* 243-255.

²⁷ Personal Interview by the Author, 6 July 2019.

²⁸ Text found on the cover page of Passport of India. Issued by the Government of India.

As a formative experience of the 21st century²⁹, it would not be erroneous to suggest that displacement has become a fundamental reality of our times³⁰. With one person getting displaced every two seconds³¹, as of 2020, 82.4 million found themselves displaced across the world, including 26.4 million were refugees, 48 million internally displaced and 4.1 million asylum seekers³². However, despite being a waking reality for millions across the world, the existing literature has largely been interested in knowing ‘what goes on while one is displaced’ or ‘what it means to be displaced’, often at the cost of ignoring the granular experiences of life that emerge as one dwells in displacement³³. At the same time, by approaching displacement primarily from a response-oriented logic, the encounters in and of this lived condition often get weaved around schisms and nomenclatures that are not necessarily as disparate as they are made out to be. A case in point is the distinction that divides the displaced between those who have crossed international borders and those that are internally displaced³⁴.

The international displaced, who are more commonly known as refugees, are people who find themselves moving across borders and between nation-states for compelling reasons such as wars, persecution and the like. The internally displaced, on the other hand, are described as ‘persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized state border’³⁵. Governed by different sets of rules and other socio-spatial regimes like those related to encampment³⁶, international and internal displacements are often approached as two distinct phenomena whose interlinkages are ignored in favour of analytical straitjackets. Hinting at what Hyndman had described as the ‘geopolitics of displacement’³⁷, these categorisations seldom follow the trajectories of displaced as their out-of-placeness is used to render their experiences as ghost-like, liminal and outside of the intelligible matrices of belonging³⁸. It is no surprise then that despite the connections that thrive between the different kinds and degrees of displacement, including those between cross-border and internal displacement, the convenience afforded by rigid categories and neat bureaucratic

²⁹ Khan, Y. 2017. *The Great Partition: The Making of India and Pakistan (New Edition)*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

³⁰ Vallely, N. 2019. ‘The Place was not a Place’: A Critical Phenomenology of Forced Displacement. In: E. Champion, ed. *The Phenomenology of Real and Virtual Places*. New York: Routledge, 204–222.

³¹ UNHCR. 2019. *Figures at a Glance*. <https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/figures-at-a-glance.html>.

³² ECPH, 2020. Forced displacement: refugees , asylum- seekers and internally displaced people (IDPs) [online]. *European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations*.

³³ Lems, A. 2016. Placing Displacement: Place-making in a World of Movement. In: *Ethnos*. Taylor & Francis, 315–337.

Lems, A. 2018. *Being-Here: Placemaking in a World of Movement*. Oxford: Berghahn Books.

³⁴ Cantor, D.J. and Apollo, J.O. 2020. Internal displacement, internal migration, and refugee flows: Connecting the dots. *Refugee Survey Quarterly*, 39 (4), 647–664.

³⁵ UNOCHA, 2004. *Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement* <https://www.internal-displacement.org/sites/default/files/publications/documents/199808-training-OCHA-guiding-principles-Eng2.pdf>, p.1

³⁶ Cohen, R. ‘New Challenges for Refugee Policy: Internally Displaced Persons’. Brookings, 1999.

<https://www.brookings.edu/on-the-record/new-challenges-for-refugee-policy-internally-displaced-persons/>.

³⁷ Hyndman, J. 2000. *Managing Displacement: Refugees and the Politics of Humanitarianism*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

³⁸ Cabot, H. 2016. ‘Refugee Voices’: Tragedy, Ghosts, and the Anthropology of Not Knowing. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 45 (6), 645–672.

discourses and practices often gets privileged over the messy experiences of living that emerge from being displaced both within and across borders.

5. Displacement – more than just a forced movement

Conventionally speaking, displacement describes a forced movement of people away from their home/land caused by factors like wars, disasters, and massive economic and social changes³⁹. The issue of displacement was first brought to the attention of the UN General Assembly in 1946 to adjudicate on its scope and offer recommendations. The resulting resolution (No.62), however, made the geopolitics of naming and describing displacement quite evident⁴⁰. The resolution was not only spatially restricted to a few countries along the Trans-Atlantic, it also exclusively focused on issues of Fascism, Spanish Falangism and the destruction caused by World War II that were uniquely germane to them. In contrast, this resolution and the others that followed it immediately paid little attention concerns of the decolonising Third World, including that of the Indian sub-continent that witnessed the largest mass migration in human history around the same time⁴¹.

Today, displacement has broadened in its geographical and topical scope to cover myriad conditions. As a phenomenon, displacement has been appropriated by different disciplines – from physics to psychology – creating a definitional polysemy. Similarly, its application today concerns itself with affective⁴², psychological⁴³, developmental⁴⁴ dimensions besides wars and conflicts. However, notwithstanding these variations, the phenomenon of displacement overall denotes a movement between two different points. Put differently, displacement presents a perspective on departure from one's 'original' position and their arrival at a different place.

³⁹ UNOCHA, 2004. *Guiding Principles On Internal Displacement* <https://www.internal-displacement.org/sites/default/files/publications/documents/199808-training-OCHA-guiding-principles-Eng2.pdf>.

⁴⁰ Odhiambo-Abuya, E. 2003. Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons: Examining Overlapping Institutional Mandates of the ICRC and the UN High Commissioner For Refugees. *Singapore Journal of International & Comparative Law*, 7, 236–266.

⁴¹ The purpose of this note is to show the politics and spatiality that have affected the definitional scope of displacement, which as a term continues to be ineffective (in the absence of a binding convention) and limited. Interestingly, the displaced today signify those who are uprooted but remain within the borders of their countries while the refugees are those who cross international border(s). However, this distinction did not hold in 1946, when the Resolution on Refugees and Displaced Persons 62 (I), while constituting the *International Refugee Organization* (IRO), made note that the term 'Displaced person applies to a person who has been deported or who has had to leave his country of nationality or former habitual residence as a result of enemy activities' (UNGA 1946). As a matter of principle with regard to 'displaced persons', IRO's main task 'is to encourage and assist in every way possible their early return to their country of origin' (ibid.). The displaced persons who objected to this return on 'valid grounds' (ibid.) could then be deemed and declared as 'Refugees'(ibid), where the term 'Refugee', 'applies to a person who has left, or who is outside of, his country of nationality or of former habitual residence, and who, whether or not he had retained his nationality, belongs to one of the following categories... (i) victims of the Nazi or fascist regimes... (ii) Spanish Republicans and other victims of the Falangist regime... (iii) Persons who were considered refugees before the outbreak of the Second World War.' See Zamindar, Vazira Fazila-Yacoobali. 2010. *The Long Partition and the Making of Modern South Asia: Refugees, Boundaries, Histories (Cultures of History)*. New York: Columbia University Press.

⁴² Butcher, M. and Dickens, L. 2016. Spatial Dislocation and Affective Displacement: Youth Perspectives on Gentrification in London. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 40 (4), 800–816.

⁴³ Carvalho e Silva, J. and Bucher-Maluschke, J.S.N.F., 2018. Psychology of forced displacement and migration: A systematic review of the scientific literature. *Estudos de Psicologia (Campinas)*, 35 (2), 127–136.

⁴⁴ McDowell, C and Morrell, G. 2010. *Displacement Beyond Conflict: Challenges for the 21st Century*. Oxford: Berghahn Books.

Displacement lends a social meaning to movement by transforming movement as such from being a bare fact into layered act of geopolitical significance. It embeds movement, both within and across national borders, in the differential politics of mobility such that who gets to travel, to where, when, how and why is determined at the cusp of many factors and different scales⁴⁵. Regardless of their contextual differences, mobility and movement are common themes that run through these literatures on displacement, both international and internal, associating this phenomenon with some or the other form of physical dislocation. However, in approaching displacement, we must not discount the relevance of other forms of displacement, such as the ‘colonising imposition of a foreign culture’⁴⁶ on individuals/communities, which may occur without movement, or its other dimensions that are social, psychological and functional⁴⁷.

For most part, physical or locational displacement that happens within and across borders is distinguished from other kinds of movements that are deemed to be voluntary in nature. Displacement is often understood in relation to circumstances beyond one’s control, compelling them to leave their ‘place of habitual residence’⁴⁸. Interestingly, displacement, as a term, is used to describe both the cause(s) and effect(s) of forced migration⁴⁹. On the one hand, displacement induces forced migration by causing individuals/communities to leave their home region because of conflict/development/disasters. On the other, displacement is what follows, both effectively and affectively, once the individuals/communities depart from their home/land. Therefore, to repurpose McFarlane⁵⁰ here, displacement both within and across borders is both a noun that names the condition which compels one to move and also a verb that describes the condition in which one finds oneself after she/he has left one’s place of origin. However, whether as a cause or an effect, a noun or a verb, displacement is symptomatic of larger structural issues that result in the disarticulation of the affected individuals/community personally and collectively⁵¹.

In describing only a particular kind of movement – one that is forced – displacement’s analytical purchase is often unable to avail itself to other kinds of movements which too may result in people’s departure from their ‘home region to which they are attached and for which they have the knowledge to make a living most effectively’⁵². While it is true that movements occur differently in terms of their causes, effects, and patterns, the over-emphasis on identifying them as distinct

⁴⁵ Hyndman, J. 2012. The Geopolitics of Migration and Mobility. *Geopolitics*, 17 (2), 243–255.; Hyndman, J. 2019. Unsettling feminist geopolitics: forging feminist political geographies of violence and displacement. *Gender, Place and Culture*, 26 (1), 3–29.

⁴⁶ Bammer, Angelika (ed.). 1994. *Displacements: Cultural Identities in Question*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

⁴⁷ Kearns, A. and Mason, P. 2013. Defining and Measuring Displacement: Is Relocation from Restructured Neighbourhoods Always Unwelcome and Disruptive? *Housing Studies*, 28 (2), 177–204.

⁴⁸ UN Guiding Principles in McDowell, Christopher, and Gareth Morrell. 2010. *Displacement Beyond Conflict: Challenges for the 21st Century*. Oxford: Berghahn Books., p. 18.

⁴⁹ Boyle, P, Keith Halfacree, and Vaughan Robinson. 2014. ‘Forced Migration.’ In *Exploring Contemporary Migration*, by Paul Boyle, Keith Halfacree and Vaughan Robinson, 180-206. London: Routledge.

⁵⁰ McFarlane, C., 2011. The city as assemblage: Dwelling and urban space. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 29, 649–671.

⁵¹ McDowell, C and Morrell, G. 2010. *Displacement Beyond Conflict: Challenges for the 21st Century*. Oxford: Berghahn Books.

⁵² UNESCO. 2019. *Displacement*. <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/social-and-human-sciences/themes/international-migration/glossary/displaced-person-displacement/>.

often neglects the connections that exist between them. The existing methods of categorisation are causative insofar that they place people into different categories depending upon their *prima facie* rationale for movement⁵³. This generates four analytical and practical issues.

Firstly, it creates differential obligations on the part of the host communities, particularly the nation-states, to host or expel those who cross into their territory, installing problematic hierarchies between different kinds of border-crossers wherein some are more acceptable to the host than others⁵⁴. Secondly, these categories are fraught with performative baggage that has a dehumanising effect on their subjects insofar as they expect these subjects to conform to pre-determined behavioural tropes – for instance victimhood amongst refugees⁵⁵ – and reduce their individual experiences into an undifferentiated whole⁵⁶. Thirdly, these categories, to recall a poignant observation made by Banerjee and Duflo⁵⁷, do not treat the subjects of these categories as ‘knowledgeable’: they are either pitied or admired but not seen as sources of information. Such classificatory regimes then banish those very subjects whose conditions inspire these categories in the first place⁵⁸. Finally, in creating artificial schisms, such categorisations also gloss over the underlying structural imbalances that may very well connect supposedly distinct forms of movement to each other, like asylum-seeking to (voluntary) migration. Here, I do not intend to suggest that the existing categories are entirely unnecessary or that being forced to move out one’s home/land is the same as emigrating for better economic opportunities. Rather, the attempt is to reiterate that such distinctions are not only arbitrary, but also have real-life effects on those who move, forced and otherwise, particularly when they are lost in the gaps between policies, practices, and the reality⁵⁹.

⁵³ Boyle, P, Halfacree, K. and Robinson, V. 2014. ‘Forced Migration.’ In *Exploring Contemporary Migration*, by Paul Boyle, Keith Halfacree and Vaughan Robinson, 180-206. London: Routledge.

⁵⁴ Ashutosh, I. and Mountz, A., 2012. The Geopolitics of Migrant Mobility : Tracing State Relations Through Refugee Claims , Boats , and Discourses. *Geopolitics*, 17 (2), 335–354.; Crawley, H. and Skleparis, D., 2018. Refugees, migrants, neither, both: Categorical fetishism and the politics of bounding in Europe’s ‘migration crisis’. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 44 (1), 48–64.; Liebe, U., Meyerhoff, J., Kroesen, M., Chorus, C., and Glenk, K., 2018. From welcome culture to welcome limits? Uncovering preference changes over time for sheltering refugees in Germany. *PLoS ONE*, 13 (8), 1–13.; Vollmer, B. and Karakayali, S., 2018. The Volatility of the Discourse on Refugees in Germany. *Journal of Immigrant and Refugee Studies*, 16 (1–2), 118–139.

⁵⁵ Cabot, H. 2016. ‘Refugee Voices’: Tragedy, Ghosts, and the Anthropology of Not Knowing. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 45 (6), 645–672.

⁵⁶ Gibson, K., Law, L., and McKay, D., 2001. Beyond Heroes and Victims: Filipina Contract Migrants, Economic Activism and Class Transformations. *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, 3 (3), 365–386.; Kallio, K.P., Häkli, J., and Pascucci, E., 2019. Refugeeness as political subjectivity: Experiencing the humanitarian border. *Environment and Planning C: Politics and Space*, 37 (7), 1258–1276.; Parker, S., 2015. ‘Unwanted invaders’: The representation of refugees and asylum seekers in the UK and Australian print media Samuel [online]. *Issue 23: Myth and Nation*. Available from: https://www.gla.ac.uk/media/media_404384_en.pdf; Ross-Sheriff, F., 2006. Afghan women in exile and repatriation: Passive victims or social actors? *Affilia - Journal of Women and Social Work*, 21 (2), 206–219.

⁵⁷ Abhijit Banerjee and Esther Duflo, two of three 2019 Nobel Laureates in Economics, had made this observation in the context of people who are affected by steep levels of poverty. While my thesis does not deal with the poor *per se*, their observation cuts across other social scenarios, including those concerning the migrants and refugees. Finding themselves at the bottom of the social ladder, these two groups are most often seen through prisms of pity or admiration, while their individual experiences, which may dismantle this binary, are not seen as sources of knowledge and thus, basis for policy-practice. See Biswas, Soutik. 2019. *Abhijit Banerjee and Esther Duflo: The Nobel couple fighting poverty*. October 19.. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-50048519>.

⁵⁸ Cole, P., 2016. Global displacement and the topography of theory. *Journal of Global Ethics*, 12 (3), 260–268.

⁵⁹ Betts, A. 2013. *Survival migration: Failed governance and the crisis of displacement*. Survival Migration: Failed Governance and the Crisis of Displacement.

Where the tendency to particularise is a problem, another concern that emerges from such classifications is of over-generalisation. The commonplace association of internal and international displacement with armed conflicts and wars makes the conflict-displacement nexus the dominant analytical perspective. Consequently, other kinds of movements that may originate from the same conflict-affected area get engulfed by the master narrative. For instance, the migration and settlement of Afghans outside Afghanistan is often described in connection with violence and conflicts⁶⁰. However, as Safri⁶¹ notes, the reasons for the departure of Afghans have been various and may not always be the direct consequences of conflict. Drought and other kinds of disaster as well as extreme economic deprivation have also driven people to other parts of Afghanistan or outside the country.

While the connections between conflict, vulnerability to disasters and poor economic performance are unmistakable, the erasure of differences can be problematic. The loss of nuances of movement and individual experiences to stereotyping generalisations in which displacement>equals=conflict once again draws attention to the arbitrariness of the current categorisations. These generalisations become all the more worrying because of the impact they have on the interactions between those who move and the national and international communities that are expected to respond to such movements⁶².

In fact, Braziel and Mannur⁶³ observe that in interrogating the ‘contemporary forms of movement, displacement and dislocation – from travel to exile – demand...specific geopolitical circumstances that precipitate the movement of people and communities’ and that these must be taken into account. How displacement comes to be ‘named and managed...depends on historically specific configurations of geopolitics as well as on cultural and economic relations of power’⁶⁴.

6. Placing Displacement

However, devoid of physical dislocation, can displacement be called internal or otherwise? After all, as a condition and an experience, it is ordinarily associated with one’s movement away from home. This brings me to another issue concerning displacement: the implication of displacement in the politics of mobility⁶⁵. Displacement is often seen through the lens of mobility and movement. This has two analytical consequences. Firstly, it disregards the experiences of displacement-in-place⁶⁶. Secondly, it privileges a botanic, or a rooted and organic association

⁶⁰ Koser, K., 2014. *Transition, Crisis and Mobility in Afghanistan: Rhetoric and Reality*. Geneva.

⁶¹ Safri, M., 2011. The Transformation of the Afghan Refugee: 1979–2009. *The Middle East Journal*, 65 (4), 587–601.

⁶² Kallio, K.P., Häkli, J., and Pascucci, E. 2019. Refugeeness as political subjectivity: Experiencing the humanitarian border. *Environment and Planning C: Politics and Space*, 37 (7), 1258–1276.

⁶³ Braziel, J E and Mannur, A. 2003. ‘Nation, Migration, Globalisation: Points of Contention in Diaspora Studies.’ In *Theorizing Diaspora: A Reader*, by Jana Evans Braziel and Anita Mannur, 1-21. Berlin: Wiley Blackwell., p. 3.

⁶⁴ Hyndman, J. 2000. ‘Border Crossings.’ In *Managing Displacement: Refugees and the Politics of Humanitarianism*, by Jennifer Hyndman, 29-61. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press., p. 32.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Belton, K.A., 2015. Rooted displacement: the paradox of belonging among stateless people. *Citizenship Studies*, 19 (8), 907–921.

between people and places such that in moving away from one's home-place, one is understood to have lost their identity⁶⁷.

According to Baubock⁶⁸, there are two ways in which displacement takes effect – when people cross the threshold of their place of habitual residence, such as the border of their province or country, or when these very thresholds are moved over them. The latter event, devoid of physical movement of people, can also generate experiences of displacement, albeit in place. The previously unresolved territorial dilemma over the enclaves, criss-crossing the Indo-Bangladesh border, were symbolic of such an experience⁶⁹. Similarly, a massive structural change in the dominant environment of one's place of habitual residence, physically or otherwise, can affect the topology of relationships witnessed in that place⁷⁰. An alteration in the power geometries of a given place⁷¹ can also create experiences of displacement without the individual/community having actually moved. Moreover, even in an event as life-threatening as a war, not everyone is able to (e.g. children in conflict zones)⁷² can or wants to move out of her home/land⁷³. Displacement as an act is affected by, amongst other things, the 'geopolitics of money'⁷⁴, which determines if, when and to where a person can move. As a result, not all those who are displaced move and not all those who move are displaced. At least, not forever.

The analytical fixation of displacement with movement away from one's home region, paradoxically, reinforces an obsession with 'rooting than travelling'⁷⁵, perpetuating a botanic or a rooted understanding of place and being. According to Basu, 'displacement...is often assumed a priori to entail not a transformation but a loss of culture and identity'⁷⁶. As a result, displacement is seen an act of 'un-homing'⁷⁷ that renders the affected people out-of-place literally and metaphorically. Perspectives on place-and-being of this kind privilege the home-region as 'an authentic space of belonging and civic participation, while devaluing and bastardising the states of displacement or dislocation, rendering them inauthentic places of residence'⁷⁸.

⁶⁷ McDowell, C, and Morrell, G. 2010. *Displacement Beyond Conflict: Challenges for the 21st Century*. Oxford: Berghahn Books.

⁶⁸ Baubock, R and Thomas, F (eds.). 2010. *Diaspora and Transnationalism: Concepts, Theories and Methods*. Amsterdam : Amsterdam University Press., p. 312.

⁶⁹ Cons, J. 2014. Impasse and Opportunity: Reframing Postcolonial Territory at the India-Bangladesh Border. *South Asia Multidisciplinary Academic Journal*, (10), 1–17.

⁷⁰ Kallio, K.P., 2018. Citizen-subject formation as geosocialization: a methodological approach on 'learning to be citizens'. *Geografiska Annaler, Series B: Human Geography*, 100 (2), 81–96.

⁷¹ Massey, D.,1994. *Space, Place, And Gender*. 1st ed. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

⁷² Schweiger, G. 2016. The duty to bring children living in conflict zones to a safe haven. *Journal of Global Ethics*, 12 (3), 380–397.

⁷³ Lubkemann, S.C. 2008. Involuntary immobility: On a theoretical invisibility in forced migration studies. *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 21 (4), 454–475.; Schewel, K., 2019. Understanding Immobility: Moving Beyond the Mobility Bias in Migration Studies. *International Migration Review*, 1–28.

⁷⁴ Hyndman, Jennifer. 2000. 'Border Crossings.' In *Managing Displacement: Refugees and the Politics of Humanitarianism*, by Jennifer Hyndman, 29-61. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press., p. 38

⁷⁵ Clifford in Basu, S. 2018. *In Diasporic Lands: Tibetan Refugees and their Transformation since the Exodus*. New Delhi: The Orient Blackswan., p. 20

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 18

⁷⁷ Elliott-Cooper, A., Hubbard, P., and Lees, L. 2019. Moving beyond Marcuse: Gentrification, displacement and the violence of un-homing. *Progress in Human Geography*, 1–18.

⁷⁸ Braziel, J E and Mannur, A. 2003. 'Nation, Migration, Globalisation: Points of Contention in Diaspora Studies.' In *Theorizing Diaspora: A Reader*, by Jana Evans Braziel and Anita Mannur, 1-21. Berlin: Wiley Blackwell., p. 6.

By presenting an exception to the accepted understanding of place, those occupying such displaces find themselves out of the familiar matrices of intelligibility, and hence, described as floating, liminal and even ghost-like⁷⁹. They are lumped together as an undifferentiated mass⁸⁰, and the individual experiences of internal and international displacement are lost to derisive labelling and generalisations⁸¹. To break from such a botanic relationship with one's 'original' place and being,⁸² it is vital that the study of space be treated as the 'study of people's spatial feelings and ideas in the stream of (human) experiences'⁸³. With an emphasis on lived experiences vis-à-vis place and place-making, it is possible to re-visit displacement as a phenomenologically relevant ground on which meaningful human engagements take place.

As an active condition that inheres constant negotiations, displacement, then, is not simply a phenomenon that is embedded within circuits of movement and mobility⁸⁴. It is also an experience that gathers in/via/against place⁸⁵, where place is not only a geographical location or a socio-spatial temporality⁸⁶ but a sine qua non of being in the world⁸⁷. In the context of Afghan asylum-seekers and asylees, leading a displaced life, they find themselves dispersed in-between India and Afghanistan. Their departure from Afghanistan may not always result in their affective and effective settlement in these Indian cities. Consequently, their aporetic arrival comes to create different social-spatial negotiations – resistance, adjustment, alterations and the like – which, in turn, throw light on the multi-faceted, plural nature of displacement as a lived condition. In fact, by highlighting the multiplicities that are integral to the condition of being-displaced, it becomes possible to challenge the conventional understanding of displacement as an anti-thesis of

⁷⁹ Ongenaert, D. and Joye, S. 2019. Selling displaced people? A multi-method study of the public communication strategies of international refugee organisations. *Disasters*, 43 (3), 478–508.

⁸⁰ Belton, K.A., 2015. Rooted displacement: the paradox of belonging among stateless people. *Citizenship Studies*, 19 (8), 907–921.

⁸¹ Czymara, C.S. and Schmidt-Catran, A.W. 2017. Refugees Unwelcome? Changes in the Public Acceptance of Immigrants and Refugees in Germany in the Course of Europe's 'Immigration Crisis'. *European Sociological Review*, 33 (6), 735–751.

⁸² Relph, T. 1977. Humanism, Phenomenology, and Geography. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 67 (1), 177–179.; Seamon, D., 1979. Phenomenology, geography and geographical education. *Journal of Geography in Higher Education*, 3 (2), 40–50.; Seamon, D., 2000. A Way of Seeing Places and People: Phenomenology in Environment-Behaviour Research. In: S. Wapner, J. Demick, T. Yamamoto, and H. Minami, eds. *Theoretical Perspectives in Environment-Behavior Research*. New York: Plenum, 157–178.; Tuan, Y.-F., 1971. Geography, Phenomenology, And The Study Of Human Nature. *Canadian Geographer / Le Géographe canadien*, 15 (3), 181–192.; Tuan, Y.-F. 1975. Place: An Experiential Perspective. *Geographical Review*, 65 (2), 151.

⁸³ Tuan, Y.-F. 1979. Space and Place: Humanistic Perspective. In: S. Gale and G. Olsson, eds. *Philosophy in Geography*. Dordrecht: Springer, 387–427., p. 388

⁸⁴ Cantor, D.J. and Apollo, J.O., 2020. Internal displacement, internal migration, and refugee flows: Connecting the dots. *Refugee Survey Quarterly*, 39 (4), 647–664.

⁸⁵ Lems, A. 2016. Placing Displacement: Place-making in a World of Movement. In: *Ethnos*. Taylor & Francis, 315–337.; Lems, A. 2018. *Being-Here: Placemaking in a World of Movement*. Oxford: Berghahn Books.

⁸⁶ Agnew, J. 2011. Space and Place. In J. Agnew & D. Livingstone (Eds.), *Handbook of Geographical Knowledge*. Sage, 316–330

⁸⁷ Olivier, A. 2019. Place and Displacement: Towards a Distopolitical Approach. *International Journal of Philosophical Studies*, 27(1), 31–56. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09672559.2019.1570537>

placement⁸⁸. Displacement, per contra, emerges as a co-constituent of the process and act of being in place⁸⁹, thereby questioning its general association with stasis, liminality and wait⁹⁰.

Simultaneously, the emotional and effective dwelling in displacement by Afghan asylum-seekers and asylees exhibit a sense of simultaneity - of being here (host country) and there (i.e. home country). Emerging from this, it is possible to argue that for these Afghans, being in and out of place can no longer be understood as two contrasting realities. Instead, they come to form a continuum that resembles a 'Mobius' strip, wherein the two experiences, i.e. of being in and out of place, keep sliding into one another. Hence, the transnational-ness of their belonging, which is a consequence of their international and internal displacement, comes to demonstrate both the relevance of roots and routes, demanding that we re-visit the phenomenon of displacement through the particularities of everyday living that emerge as one dwells in displacement⁹¹.

7. *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* (the world is one family)

In a seminal work on Indian migration, Chinmay Tumbe provides a picture-conjuring description of the Main Hall of the Indian Parliament wherein lays inscribed a Sanskrit quote: *vasudhaiva kutumbakam*.⁹² The world is one family. A country that was born in the throes of a mass movement - the largest that the world has seen to date – can be no stranger to the trauma and loss that accompany separation and exile. Hence, it must make conscious efforts to create a conducive legal environment in which a *transition* can be made from the existing charity-based approach to one based on the rights of the refugees, asylum-seekers and stateless persons. A change in the legal reception may also spur a transformation in the social perceptions of the hosts vis-a-vis these communities. The erasure of social stigma may not only be crucial for promoting healthy and lasting integration, but it may also aid the mutual growth and development of the host and hosted in the long-run.

Serendipitously enough, the heterolocalism⁹³ amongst the Afghan refugees because of legal and policy reasons, has not only averted their encampment, but it has also created avenues for social and economic interactions with the host society. The changing cultural landscape of areas such as Lajpat Nagar in New Delhi, where hoardings in Persianised script are matched in number by the Indian shopkeepers speaking Farsi, testify to the transformative impact that the dialogue between the host and hosted can unleash. Obversely too, the fallouts of the pandemic on the hosts are being felt by the hosted, and vice-versa. In these circumstances, it becomes all the more necessary to

⁸⁸ Adey, P., Bowstead, J. C., Brickell, K., Desai, V., Dolton, M., Pinkerton, A., & Siddiqi, A. 2020. Introduction. In P. Adey, J. C. Bowstead, K. Brickell, V. Desai, M. Dolton, A. Pinkerton, & A. Siddiqi (Eds.), *The Handbook of Displacement*. Palgrave Macmillan, 1-38

⁸⁹ Million, M. L. 1992. *It Was Home: A Phenomenology of Place and Involuntary Displacement as Illustrated by the Forced Dislocation of Five Southern Alberta Families in the Oldman River Dam Flood Area*. Saybrook Institute Graduate School and Research Centre.

⁹⁰ Deek, A. Al. 2016. *Writing Displacement: Home and Identity in Contemporary Post-Colonial English Fiction*. Palgrave Macmillan.

⁹¹ Lems, A. 2016. Placing Displacement: Place-making in a World of Movement. In: *Ethnos*. Taylor & Francis, 315–337.; Lems, A. 2018. *Being-Here: Placemaking in a World of Movement*. Oxford: Berghahn Books.

⁹² Tumbe, Chinmay. 2018. *India Moving: A History of Migration*. New Delhi: Viking.

⁹³ Saxena, C. 2019. '(Review Essay) Experiencing transnational displacement: Dwelling, segregation, identity, and host.' *Political Geography* 1-4.

create a comprehensive legal and social framework within which the challenges of the host and the hosted communities can be addressed symbiotically instead of being seen as distinct and separate from each other. If anything, the times in which we live today have (further) exposed the mutual dependence of our communities on each other.

The need of the hour is to adopt what the UNHCR describes as the ‘whole of society approach’,⁹⁴ which connects not only different actors but also their respective goals. Besides forging connections between and across nations, this approach is aimed at assisting in systematising and regularising the disparate national efforts within. In India, for instance, the first step towards this approach, as suggested by the UNHCR, can entail the recognition of connections between the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the socio-economic-political challenges faced by the refugees. As the distance between such objectives is reduced, it will be possible for countries like India to honour its national and international commitments with a united, cohesive set of efforts.

While we wait for such inter-linkages to be realised, India must play its part as a rising, responsible power by providing adequate legal and social support to those who have sought refuge in the country. Extension of public welfare support, such as the right to education, basic healthcare facilities, and the like to the refugees/asylum-seekers can enable them to lead a dignified life. At the same time, India must align its national legislation pertaining to refugees, asylum-seekers and stateless persons not only with the international norms, but also with its constitutional gold-standards of equality and justice. Today, the need to mitigate the existing geopolitical constraints with networks and assemblages that transect scales and priorities are more pressing than ever. We must come together to address connected challenges to give real people, embodied in my unreal Parwaz to fly again, but to place(s) that they can call home.

⁹⁴ UNHCR. 2020. *India - Mandate Refugees*. April 1.

<https://reporting.unhcr.org/india#:~:text=In%202019%2C%20India%20will%20be,mostly%20residing%20in%20urban%20areas>