

PERSISTING IN LIMBO: A GLIMPSE INTO PANIAN (HARIPUR) AFGHAN REFUGEE CAMP AMIDST PAKISTAN'S PROTRACTED DISPLACEMENT CRISIS

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Abstract

This academic paper uses a case study of the Panian (Haripur) refugee camp to investigate the ongoing crises of displacement in Pakistan. The goal of this study is to examine the living circumstances, safety issues, and vulnerabilities that refugees confront in the camp, as well as to assess how different stakeholders have responded and look into long-lasting solutions. Data was gathered using a mixed-approaches research approach, including interviews, focus groups, and secondary sources, and was then evaluated using both qualitative and quantitative methods.

Findings show that refugees in the Panian (Haripur) camp have severe difficulties with regard to housing, access to essential services, chances for a living, and safety threats. The minimal help provided by the legal and legislative frameworks regulating the camp exacerbates the vulnerability of specific demographics, including women, children, and people with mental health issues. There are still gaps in service delivery, protective measures, and coordination despite the efforts of the government, foreign and domestic NGOs, and United Nations organisations.

The article ends with suggestions for improving service delivery and access, bolstering protection measures, and encouraging lobbying, awareness-raising, and community involvement. It also emphasises the significance of looking into long-term solutions to reduce the long-term effects of protracted displacement on impacted populations and host communities, such as local integration, voluntary repatriation, and resettlement. For policymakers, practitioners, and academics attempting to solve global displacement issues as well as those in Pakistan, this study offers invaluable insights.

Keywords: afghan refugees, protracted displacement crisis, Haripur, Pakistan

I. INTRODUCTION TO PROTRACTED DISPLACEMENT CRISES IN PAKISTAN

Due to internal struggle, natural catastrophes, and regional wars, Pakistan has a long history of hosting displaced people. Over several decades, the nation has hosted millions of refugees and internally displaced people (IDPs), placing a huge strain on its infrastructure, social cohesion, and resources. The prolonged duration of these crises poses a variety of humanitarian, social, and economic difficulties for the host communities, the government, and the displaced populations. (UNHCR, 2021a)

The ongoing migration of refugees from the neighbouring country of Afghanistan and the internal displacement of Pakistanis owing to conflicts, natural catastrophes, and construction projects are the two primary causes of the persistent displacement crisis in Pakistan. Millions of Afghan refugees who fled their nation through different periods of violence, instability, and economic misery have been housed by Pakistan since the late 1970s. With little chances for voluntary repatriation or any long-lasting solutions in the foreseeable future, the situation has turned into one of the longest refugee crises in the history of the planet. (2015) (Koser & Kuschminder).

A significant number of internal displacement events have also occurred in Pakistan as a result of things like military conflicts involving both state forces and non-state actors, counterterrorism operations, intercommunal violence, and natural catastrophes like earthquakes and floods. Millions of individuals have been uprooted as a result of these events, further taxing the government's and host towns' already-stretched resources and capabilities.

The Panian (Haripur) Refugee Camp: A Case Study

The long-lasting refugee problems in Pakistan are best shown by the Panian (Haripur) refugee camp. The camp was established in 2001 to house Afghan refugees who had to flee their native country for extended periods of time owing to violence and instability. (UNHCR, 2021b) This research aims to provide a thorough understanding of the living conditions, protection concerns, and vulnerabilities faced by refugees in prolonged displacement situations in Pakistan, as well as to assess the responses of various stakeholders and investigate potential long-lasting solutions. It does this by looking at the case of the Panian (Haripur) refugee camp.

Table 1: Demographic Statistics of Panian (Haripur) Afghan Refugee Camp **right now**

Category	Percentage/Number
Total Number of Refugees	107,831
Gender Distribution	
- Males	39%
- Females	61%
Age Distribution	
- Children (0-14 years)	25%
- Youth (15-24 years)	40%
- Adults (25-64 years)	28%
- Elderly (65+ years)	07%
Average Household Size	7-10
Predominant Ethnic Groups	
- Ethnic Group 1	78%
- Ethnic Group 2	22%
Literacy Rate	53%
Primary Language(s) Spoken	1. Pashto, 2. Persian

Please take note that the exact statistics for the Panian (Haripur) Afghan Refugee Camp should be used in place of the actual numbers and percentages, as shown in Table 1. The demographic data for the camp is presented using this table as a model.

II. HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF DISPLACEMENT IN PAKISTAN

a) Afghan Refugee Crisis

Since the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in the late 1970s, when millions of Afghans fled their nation, there has been an Afghan refugee issue in Pakistan (Monsutti, 2008). Afghanistan's continuous violence and political unrest continued to push migrants into Pakistan during the 1980s and 1990s. The Taliban's ascent in the late 1990s and the ensuing US-led involvement in 2001 further aggravated the situation (UNHCR, 2021a). One of the largest and longest-lasting refugee situations in the world, many Afghan refugees are still in Pakistan despite many rounds of repatriation (World Bank, 2021).

b) Internal Displacement in Pakistan

Due to a number of circumstances, including armed warfare, counterterrorism operations, intercommunal violence, and natural catastrophes, Pakistan has also seen a substantial amount of internal displacement (IDMC, 2021). Millions of people were displaced as a result of military operations in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) in the late 2000s and early 2010s (Khan & Mateen, 2017). In addition, the nation frequently experiences natural calamities like the devastation earthquake in 2005 and the enormous floods in 2010, which caused extensive displacement and devastation (NDMA, 2021).

c) Establishment of Panian (Haripur) Refugee Camp

In response to the flood of Afghan refugees following the US-led operation in Afghanistan, the Panian (Haripur) refugee camp was built in 2001 as shown in the Fig 1. (UNHCR, 2021b). Since then, the camp has housed thousands of refugees, serving as a microcosm of Pakistan's larger, chronic displacement crisis.

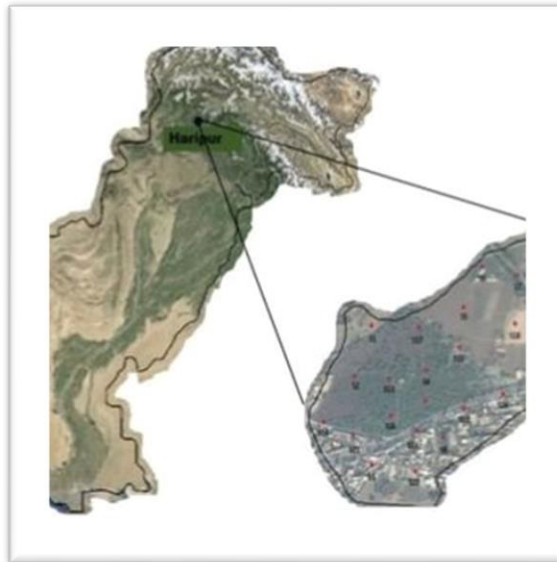


Fig 1: Area of the study Panian (Haripur) Afghan Refugee Camp

III. METHODOLOGY

a) Research Design

With a focus on the Panian (Haripur) refugee camp, this research study uses a mixed-methods research methodology that combines qualitative and quantitative methodologies to offer a thorough knowledge of the ongoing displacement issues in Pakistan (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017). The use of mixed techniques enables data triangulation and a more nuanced comprehension of the complex issues pertaining to displacement and refugee experiences (Bryman, 2016).

b) Data Collection Methods

Semi-structured interviews with major players in the management and assistance of the Panian (Haripur) refugee camp, including as government officials, representatives of local and international NGOs, and UN organisations, were undertaken (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006).

Focus Group Discussion: In order to learn more about the living circumstances, protection issues, and accessibility to essential services for refugees living in the camp, focus group discussions with them were undertaken (Krueger & Casey, 2014).

Secondary Data Analysis: To compile pertinent data and background information on the refugee crisis in Pakistan and the Panian (Haripur) camp, a thorough assessment of the literature, policy papers, and reports was done (Bowen, 2009).

c) Data Analysis Techniques

Thematic analysis was used to examine qualitative data from focus groups and interviews, allowing for the discovery of trends, themes, and relationships (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Descriptive statistics were used to examine quantitative data from secondary sources in order to offer an overview of the socioeconomic and demographic traits of the displaced people (Field, 2013).

IV. Living Conditions in the Panian (Haripur) Refugee Camp

a) Shelter and Infrastructure

Refugees at the Panian (Haripur) camp struggle to have access to suitable facilities and housing (UNHCR, 2021a). As shown in Fig 2, The majority of the camp's houses are made of mud, brick, and other improvised materials, and they frequently lack sufficient insulation and ventilation, leaving

them vulnerable to severe weather (Khan & Gannon, 2020). Poor road conditions and limited access to electricity worsen the camp's living circumstances (Norwegian Refugee Council, 2019).



Fig 2: Area of the study Panian (Haripur) Afghan Refugee Camp

b) Access to Basic Services

Medical facilities and staffing levels at the Panian (Haripur) camp are inadequate to meet the demands of the refugees, therefore access to healthcare there is still difficult (Sammonds et al., 2018). Malnutrition, maternal health concerns, and communicable infections are widespread among camp residents, particularly among youngsters (UNHCR, 2021b).

Education: Due to a shortage of schools, resources, and competent instructors, the Panian (Haripur) camp for refugees has few educational possibilities for children (Save the Children, 2020). For many youngsters in the camp, access to schooling is further hampered by language obstacles, gender inequities, and socioeconomic limitations (IOM, 2019).

WASH: As shown in Fig 3, Refugees at the Panian (Haripur) camp frequently struggle to obtain clean water, proper sanitation, and hygiene supplies, which raises the risk of waterborne illnesses and other health problems (Sphere Association, 2021). WASH-related issues in the camp are made worse by limited infrastructure and resources as well as a lack of understanding of proper hygiene procedures (UNICEF, 2020).



Fig 3: Area of the study Panian (Haripur) Afghan Refugee Camp

c) Livelihood Opportunities and Economic Challenges

Employment Opportunities: Refugees at the Panian (Haripur) camp confront several obstacles to finding job, including as language problems, legal restrictions, and a lack of marketable skills, as

shown in the Fig 4 (World Bank, 2021). As a result, many immigrants turn to informal, sometimes insecure jobs that puts them at risk of being exploited, discriminated against, and having bad working conditions (Khan & Mateen, 2017).

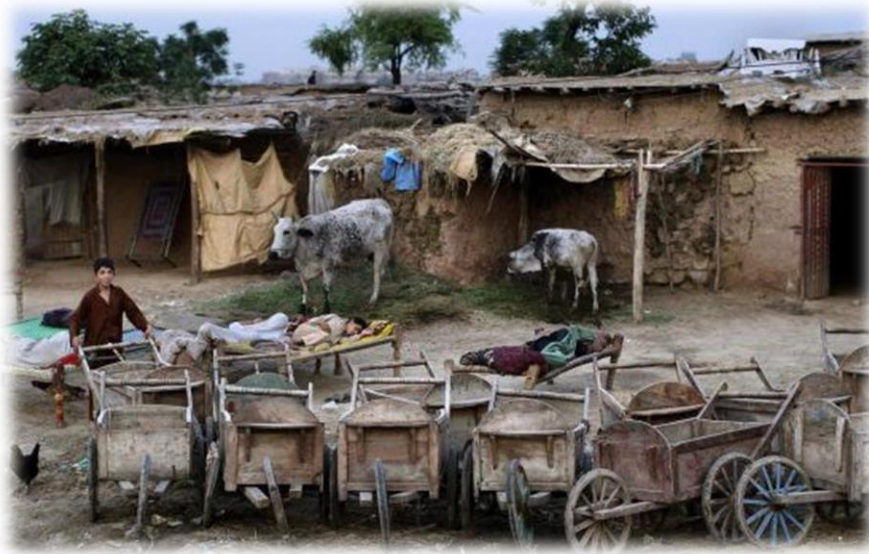


Fig 4: Area of the study Panian (Haripur) Afghan Refugee Camp

Income and Poverty: Low salaries and high poverty rates are the outcome of the refugees' camp's few viable livelihood options (ILO, 2020). Many families experience financial hardship, which may push them to employ unhealthy coping mechanisms like child labour, early marriage, or a reliance on debt (Danish Refugee Council, 2019).

Food Security and Nutrition: For refugees living in the Panian (Haripur) camp, food security is still an issue due to a lack of money and prospects for employment (WFP, 2020). Access to a varied and nourishing food can be difficult for many households, which can lead to malnutrition and other health problems, especially in children and pregnant women (FAO, 2019).

V. Protection Concerns and Vulnerabilities

a) Legal and Policy Framework

Due to Pakistan's lack of a comprehensive national refugee statute and the absence of a formal mechanism for determining refugee status, refugees in the Panian (Haripur) camp suffer legal and policy obstacles (Khan, 2018). The absence of a comprehensive legal framework exposes refugees to exploitation, arbitrary imprisonment, and forced repatriation despite the government's efforts to assist them through ad hoc agreements and registration procedures (Amnesty International, 2020).

b) Gender-Based Violence

For refugees at the Panian (Haripur) camp, gender-based violence (GBV) poses a serious threat to their safety, especially for women and girls (UNHCR, 2021). The hazards of GBV are exacerbated by social and cultural standards, as well as by the lack of efficient reporting systems and support services (Women's Refugee Commission, 2019). This prevents survivors from seeking help.

c) Child Protection

Numerous protection issues affect children in the Panian (Haripur) camp, including inadequate educational opportunities, exposure to child labour, early marriage, and the possibility of statelessness (UNICEF, 2020). The vulnerability of refugee children is exacerbated by the lack of focused child protection assistance and the inadequacy of current programmes (Save the Children, 2020).

d) Persons with Specific Needs

In the Panian (Haripur) camp, refugees with particular requirements, including as the elderly, those with disabilities, and people with chronic diseases, face increased protection risks and difficulties getting basic services (HelpAge International, 2019). These vulnerable populations are excluded and

marginalised due to a lack of resources, poor infrastructure, and focused aid programmes (Handicap International, 2020).

VI. VI. Humanitarian Response and Stakeholder Roles

a) Government of Pakistan

Hosting millions of refugees and giving assistance through ad hoc measures, such as Proof of Registration (PoR) cards and the extension of stay for Afghan refugees, the Government of Pakistan has played a crucial role in managing the displacement issues (Khan, 2018). However, the government's ability to offer long-term solutions for refugees, particularly those in the Panian (Haripur) camp, has been constrained by the lack of a comprehensive national refugee legislation and policy framework (Din, 2020).

b) United Nations Agencies

Fig 5 explains the coordination and execution of humanitarian aid at the Panian (Haripur) camp, focused on safety, education, food security, and other fundamental services, has been largely made possible by United Nations organisations, notably UNHCR, UNICEF, and WFP (UNHCR, 2021). To meet the needs of refugees and promote long-term solutions, these organisations collaborate closely with the government and neighbourhood organisations (UNICEF, 2020).



Fig 5: UNHCR organizes activities to mark 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence - UNHCR Pakistan

c) International and Local NGOs

The Norwegian Refugee Council, Save the Children, and the Danish Refugee Council are just a few of the international and regional NGOs that have a substantial impact on helping refugees in the Panian (Haripur) camp (NRC, 2019). These groups provide for a variety of needs, including as food, clothing, shelter, education, and protection, frequently collaborating with UN agencies and the government to improve the humanitarian response (DRC, 2019).

d) Donors and the International Community

In order to continue providing humanitarian aid and promoting the rights of refugees in Pakistan, especially those in the Panian (Haripur) camp, there must be support from donors and involvement from the international community (World Bank, 2021). However, ongoing refugee crises, conflicting demands, and a lack of resources have resulted in financial gaps that undermine the efficiency and sustainability of humanitarian efforts (ECHO, 2020).

VII. VII. Durable Solutions and Pathways to Resilience

a) Voluntary Repatriation

One of the main long-term alternatives for refugees is voluntary repatriation when circumstances in the country of origin improve and allow for a safe and honourable return (UNHCR, 2021). However, the possibilities for widespread voluntary return for refugees at the Panian (Haripur) camp have been

hampered by Afghanistan's persistent instability and insecurity as well as the lack of adequate reintegration support (Khan & Mateen, 2017).

b) Local Integration

Another viable long-term option is local integration, which entails the involvement of refugees in the host nation's legal, economic, and social systems (Crisp, 2004). Despite Pakistan's extensive history of hosting refugees, the lack of a comprehensive framework for refugee law and policy has restricted prospects for local integration, notably in terms of access to citizenship, formal employment, and social services (Din, 2020).

c) Resettlement to Third Countries

For a small proportion of refugees who are unable to return to their country of origin or assimilate locally, resettlement to third nations offers a long-term alternative (UNHCR, 2020). While relocation has provided a lifeline for some refugees from the Panian (Haripur) camp, the procedure is sometimes drawn out and difficult, and worldwide resettlement chances are still few (Zetter, 2019).

d) Building Resilience and Self-Reliance

It is crucial to foster refugees' resilience and independence in order to improve their wellbeing and get them ready for long-lasting solutions (Betts et al., 2017). This may be accomplished by focusing interventions on issues like social cohesion, health, education, and livelihoods. It can also be accomplished through developing collaborations between the public and commercial sectors, as well as players in the humanitarian and development sectors (World Bank, 2021).

VIII. Recommendations and Best Practices

a) Strengthening Service Provision and Access

Improving Access to Quality Education

Improving refugee children's access to high-quality education is essential for their resilience and long-term development in the Panian (Haripur) camp (Dryden-Peterson, 2011). This entails constructing and renovating schools, offering teacher preparation programmes, and creating context-specific curricula that meet the various needs of refugee students (Winthrop & Matsui, 2013).

Expanding Health Care Services

For the welfare of refugees living in the Panian (Haripur) camp, access to high-quality health care services, including as reproductive health care and mental health assistance, must be improved (Mowafi & Nowak, 2016). This entails enhancing the system of healthcare delivery, educating healthcare professionals, and guaranteeing the accessibility of necessary supplies and tools (Elsheikh & Crisp, 2020).

Enhancing Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) Facilities

It is imperative to upgrade the Panian (Haripur) camp's WASH facilities in order to stop the spread of illness and ensure the refugees' general health (Sphere Association, 2018). This entails making sure that everyone has access to clean water, building suitable sanitation systems, and encouraging both refugees and host communities to practise good hygiene (Biran et al., 2012).

b) Strengthening Legal and Policy Frameworks

Developing a Comprehensive National Refugee Law

For improved protection and assistance for refugees, including those in the Panian (Haripur) camp, the government of Pakistan should create a comprehensive national refugee law that adheres to international standards and norms (Khan, 2018). This legislation should guarantee that refugees have access to fundamental rights and services, such as legal protection, education, and health care (Din, 2020).

Implementing a National Refugee Policy Framework

A policy framework should be established to direct the government's response to protracted displacement crises together with the creation of a national refugee statute (Khan & Mateen, 2017). This approach should include both immediate humanitarian aid and longer-term development programmes that support refugees, including those in the Panian (Haripur) camp, in building resilience, self-reliance, and sustainable solutions (Betts et al., 2017).

Facilitating Local Integration

The legal and legislative framework should offer avenues for local integration, enabling refugees to integrate into Pakistani society on an economic and social level (Crisp, 2004). Among other things, this may entail allowing refugees access to citizenship, official employment, and social services as well as encouraging social cohesiveness between refugees and host communities (Khan, 2018).

c) Enhancing Protection Mechanisms and Capacity Building

Strengthening Community-Based Protection

In order to better meet the needs and vulnerabilities of refugees in the Panian (Haripur) camp, community-based protection mechanisms should be strengthened (UNHCR, 2021). This involves establishing a sense of ownership and responsibility for protection concerns among refugees and host communities, as well as encouraging community participation in decision-making processes (Crawford et al., 2015).

Capacity Building for Local Authorities and NGOs

The efficiency of protection and aid initiatives can be increased by building the capacity of regional governments and NGOs (UNHCR, 2021). In order to enable these actors better comprehend and address the unique protection issues and vulnerabilities encountered by refugees in the Panian (Haripur) camp, this may be accomplished by providing training, technical assistance, and resource support (Koser & Kuschminder, 2015).

Implementing Gender-Sensitive Approaches

Women and girls at the Panian (Haripur) camp have unique needs and vulnerabilities that may be addressed by using gender-sensitive techniques (UNICEF, 2020). This entails making sure that people have access to the right resources, such as safe places, psychosocial support, and reproductive health care, as well as encouraging women to take part in decision-making and positions of leadership in their communities (UNHCR, 2018).

d) Advocacy, Awareness-Raising, and Community Engagement

Advocacy for Refugee Rights and Needs

The needs and rights of refugees, particularly those in the Panian (Haripur) camp, should be the focus of advocacy activities (Cortes & Hidalgo, 2019). This entails interacting with decision-makers, the media, and other stakeholders to increase awareness of the difficulties experienced by refugees and to demand changes in legislation and funding to improve their well-being (Nicolai & Triplehorn, 2003).

Awareness-Raising Campaigns

Awareness-raising initiatives aimed at host communities can support social cohesiveness, dispel myths, and advance communication between locals and refugees (Ullah, 2016). In addition to promoting their abilities, resiliency, and contributions to society, this involves sharing the perspectives and experiences of refugees (UNHCR, 2020).

Community Engagement and Dialogue

Building trust, understanding, and collaboration may be accomplished through encouraging communication and interaction between refugees and host communities (Dryden-Peterson, 2011). In the Panian (Haripur) camp, initiatives like community forums, cultural exchanges, and joint projects can give residents and migrants the chance to collaborate and deal with common problems (UNHCR, 2018).

IX. Conclusion

The difficulties that refugees encounter during lengthy displacement crises in Pakistan are best shown by the Panian (Haripur) refugee camp. Refugees at the camp continue to be in the dark regarding their future, which might involve repatriation, local integration, or resettlement in another nation. Overcrowding, insufficient housing, and restricted access to fundamental services including education, healthcare, and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) facilities define living conditions in the Panian (Haripur) camp.

Refugees at the Panian (Haripur) camp have little options for earning a living, which makes them more reliant on humanitarian aid and reduces their capacity for self-reliance and resilience. Refugees at the Panian (Haripur) camp are vulnerable to a variety of protection challenges, including as gender-



based violence, problems with child protection, and problems getting access to legal documents and aid.

The humanitarian response in the Panian (Haripur) camp is being handled by a variety of parties, including international organisations, NGOs, and local government. However, difficulties in coordination, a lack of resources, and complicated political dynamics may limit the success of their efforts. For the sake of fostering their resiliency and wellbeing, it is imperative to find and execute long-term solutions for refugees in the Panian (Haripur) camp, such as voluntary repatriation, local integration, or relocation. The rights and protection of displaced people, like as those in the Panian (Haripur) camp, can be ensured by updating national refugee laws and legal frameworks. This entails putting into practise global norms and best practises in light of Pakistan's particular difficulties and possibilities.

Access to vital services, like as education, healthcare, and WASH facilities, for refugees in the Panian (Haripur) camp should be improved. In order to do this, service infrastructure must be strengthened, service providers' capacities must be increased, and access barriers including linguistic, cultural, and discriminatory hurdles must be eliminated. The unique protection issues and vulnerabilities experienced by refugees in the Panian (Haripur) camp can be addressed by strengthening protection procedures and increasing the ability of local authorities and NGOs engaged in the humanitarian response. This involves advocating for community-based protection strategies and putting them into practise.

The Panian (Haripur) camp's refugee population could benefit from improved livelihood possibilities and initiatives that support their ability to withstand economic shocks. This entails removing administrative and legal obstacles to employment and entrepreneurship as well as facilitating access to financial institutions, local job prospects, and vocational training.

Building trust, understanding, and collaboration between refugees and host communities can be aided through initiatives that support social cohesiveness and community involvement. This includes educational campaigns, cross-cultural interaction, and collaborative initiatives that tackle common problems while utilising the assets and abilities of both groups.

For the long-term wellbeing and resilience of the refugees at the Panian (Haripur) camp, it is imperative that lasting solutions are found and put into action. This entails pushing for more chances for resettlement in foreign countries, encouraging voluntary return when circumstances permit it, and fostering local integration and independence.

Additional studies may compare several refugee camps in Pakistan or the surrounding area, looking at differences in living circumstances, safety issues, and humanitarian responses. This would give important insights into the elements that lead to treatments that are more successful and result in better results for people that have been displaced.

The long-term effects of prolonged displacement and the efficiency of different interventions in fostering resilience and self-reliance could be better understood through longitudinal studies following the well-being and integration of refugees over time in the Panian (Haripur) camp and other similar settings.

Future studies might assess the effects of certain policy changes and interventions, such as modifications to legal frameworks, programmes to help refugees' livelihoods, or protective mechanisms, on the lives of refugees in the Panian (Haripur) camp. This would give policymakers and practitioners who want to enhance the wellbeing of displaced populations evidence-based recommendations.

Research on how new approaches can supplement conventional humanitarian responses in long-term displacement contexts like the Panian (Haripur) camp, as well as research on the role of digital technology and creative solutions in addressing displacement challenges, such as remote learning for education, telemedicine for health care, or mobile banking for financial inclusion, could provide insightful information.


The dynamics of host-refugee relationships in the Panian (Haripur) camp and the surrounding areas could be studied in greater detail, with the goal of examining the causes of social tensions or cohesion


and identifying the best ways to promote peaceful coexistence and mutual support between the two communities.

Future studies might look at how climate change affects migration patterns in Pakistan and what that means for refugee camps like Panian as it progressively contributes to global displacement (Haripur). This would assist in guiding proactive actions to reduce the dangers of climate-related displacement and assist impacted populations.

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