

# The 'Kabuliwala' Syndrome - Assessing The Sociological Cultural and Economic Aspects of the Afghani Muslims in India.

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## ABSTRACT

**Introduction:** Post implementation of CAA, the glaring exclusion of Islam and increasing Islamophobia by the right-wing activists in power have stirred widespread debates and discussions regarding its implications on various minority communities settled in India, including those from Afghanistan. This paper uniquely combines social psychology, transnationalism, and acculturation studies to draw up a theoretical framework. Moreover, statistical measures, aided by text analysis, were explored to strategise its aftermath in terms of sociological, cultural, and economic aspects, numerically. Finally, proposing a policy framework to restore the Refugee crisis and enhance cultural competence in India post CAA.

**Objectives:** The Present study considers three well-defined objectives:

- To codify and deconstruct the concept of Kabuliwala syndrome and adding it to the mainstream discourse.
- To identify the sociological, cultural and economic aspects of Afghan Muslims affected due to the introduction of CAA.
- To propose a policy framework for non-refoulment and integration of refugees post CAA.

**Methods:** This paper considers a wide range of content analysis using traditional text analysis techniques on 30 published articles from a 10-year period (2014-2023) to assess the significant socio-cultural and economic factors affecting Afghan Muslims residing in India in the aftermath of the CAA. The present study has considered both humanist tradition and positivist tradition for the search of meaning and interpretation from the articles (texts) analyzed, further reducing those texts to codes that represent concepts and applying standard quantitative methods to explore the relationships among the codes.

**Results:** The present study has observed significant factors proxying the sociological, cultural, economic aspects of affected Afghan Muslims. It has also The present study has also observed few control variables to be significant. Further, the study has ranked the factors on the basis of composite index for its magnitude of impact. Further, as the coefficient table has suggested the most significant social factors are: alienation, religious discrimination and conversion, citizenship, domestic abuse, refugee status. Weighing in on the cultural factors: linguistic barrier and islamophobia seems to be quite the stir. Whereas, the crucial economic factors are unemployment and illiteracy.

**Conclusions:** Based on the coefficient values and interconnectedness of the various parameters, the paper concludes by proposing few pointers that could be weighed in by policy makers while attempting to formulate Refugee policies for India in the wake of CAA.

**Keywords:** Kabuliwala syndrome, Ethnic Cleansing, Refugee, Islamophobia, Acculturation, Content Analysis, Transnationalism, Non-Refoulment Policy.

## INTRODUCTION

In 2019, the Bhartiya Janata Party led Indian Government passed the Citizenship Amendment Act, which fast-tracked and guaranteed Indian citizenship to the persecuted minorities of neighboring countries like Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Bangladesh, who have immigrated to the country before 2014, provided they are Hindu, Sikh, Christian, Buddhist or Parsis by religion. This glaring exclusion of Islam and increasing Islamophobia by right-wing activists in power has stirred widespread debate and discussion regarding its implications on various minority communities settled in India, including those from Afghanistan. This legislation has not only influenced sociocultural dynamics but has also had significant economic repercussions on Afghani Muslims residing in India. Taking cue from Rabindranath Tagore's classic short story- Kabuliwala, this article decodes the stereotype of the violent, predatory Afghan traders popularly known as 'Kabuliwala' and the legacy of the hegemonic fear that has been instilled into the Indian mindscape. Further assessment of its aftermath in light of the CAA. Though India hosts over 18,000 Muslim Afghan refugees, they are largely victimized by India's jittery domestic legislative policies regarding the rights and status of refugees, owing to India not being a signatory to the 1951 UN Refugee Convention ("UNHCR. 2021," 2015). This is further problematized by India's recent endorsement of the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR), which comes with certain moral ethical bindings (Alexander & Singh, 2022). These refugees, especially middle-class Muslims, fall prey to raging Islamophobia, stereotyping, poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, sociocultural alienation, lingual ostracization, and state-authorized ethnic cleansing(Ahmed, 2022). This paper uniquely combines social psychology, transnationalism, and acculturation studies to draw up a theoretical framework and statistical coefficients and econometrics to strategize its aftermath numerically. Afghani migration to India began as early as the 13th century, with the dawn of the Khilji dynasty, maneuvering through the Soviet invasion in 1979, the rise of the first Taliban regime in 1996, and continues until today with the establishment of the Talibani government in 2021("Afghanistan's refugees: Forty years of dispossession," 2021). Although India is a member of UNO and SAARC, it hosts refugees from all neighboring countries like Bangladesh, Tibet, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Pakistan, yet has not been party to any international convention or treatise pertaining to refugees. Its apprehension probably stems from financial obligations, diplomatic predicaments, and most importantly, internal security threats(Rajan, 2021). However, the refugees pouring in from the aforementioned countries were Hindus or Buddhists fleeing religious persecution, but in the case of Afghanistan, the scenario was different, as the refugees were mostly middle-class Muslims(Jha, 2018). Further, (Schmeidl, 2002) interpreted that in the international geopolitical scenario, the Afghan refugee crisis has taken a quirky twist, as (forced) migration was not linked to security until years after the initial displacement and during a time when refugee numbers were not even at their peak. Moreover, he observed that countries with fewer refugees felt threatened more than those in the bulk. The article projected that growing Islamophobia seemed to have a direct linkage between domestic security concerns and the migrated population; therefore, the duration had become more relevant than the size. (Schmeidl, 2002).

The present paper has taken into consideration a wide range of content analysis using traditional text analysis techniques on 30 published articles for a period of 10 years (2014-2023) to assess the significant socio-cultural and economic factors affecting Afghan Muslims residing in India in the aftermath of the CAA. The present study observed five, four, and five significant factors proxying the sociological, cultural, and economic aspects of affected Afghan Muslims, respectively. The present study also considered five controlled variables, of which two were found to be significant. Furthermore, the study ranked the factors on the basis of the composite index for its magnitude of impact. The present study considers Cronbach's alpha coefficients for all parameters representing the sociological, cultural, and economic aspects as a whole. The coefficient value of 0.8856 confirms that the data has high reliability, signifying internal consistency. This study was also extended to check for significant correlation coefficients between these parameters. Finally, the study concludes with the proposed policy framework to restore the refugee crisis and enhance cultural competence in India post-CAA.

#### Search Strategy:

The data for content analysis included peer-reviewed articles and grey literature published between 2014 and 2023, which reflected the contemporary contextual conditions of refugees and asylum seekers in India and other neighboring countries. Articles that zoomed in on socio-cultural and economic impacts on refugees trying to flee various persecution and their failed attempts at acculturation and threat of religious or ethnic cleansing were considered. Quantitative and qualitative parameters were simultaneously weighed to map the varied experiences.

Articles that did not focus on Islamic refugees in Afghanistan were excluded. A synergized interdisciplinary search strategy was formulated to access relevant databases and search engines such as ProQuest, Academic Search Complete, Scopus, Informit, Sodhganga, Jstor, Google Scholar, and Google were put to use. Divergent search terms, later incorporated as variables were: 'refugee,' 'asylum seeker,' 'ethnicity,' 'religious persecution,' 'humanitarian,' 'women,' 'acculturation,' 'alienation,' 'social,' and 'health.' The reference lists of the included articles were searched for relevant articles.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Foundation of the Indian Refugee Non-Refoulment Policy Framework:**

The Oxford Handbook of Refugee and Forced Migration Studies suggests that this genre has bloomed only contemporarily as a field of academic interest and interdisciplinary research. Initially, it was a niche area within academia, mainly involving a selected group of scholars and policy analysts. However, over time, it has evolved into a well-established, global field that attracts thousands of students and spans multiple disciplines, from traditional fields such as sociology, anthropology, and law to newer interdisciplinary programs across the Humanities and Social and Political Sciences. This shift has broadened the focus of the field beyond just academic inquiry; it now includes action-oriented research aimed at advocating refugees' rights and needs. The blend of academic rigor with activism and policy influence reflects how the field not only strives to deepen our understanding of displacement, but also seeks to enact meaningful changes in policy and practice for displaced populations (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh et al., 2014). As our current study suggests, India being home to millions of refugees is a socio-cultural melting pot and with the impending CAA, is in desperate need for a well-framed legislative policy concerning the future of refugees. The semi-porous boundaries, secular constitution, and affordable lifestyle had wooed thousands of displaced populations in the past. However, CAA has created volatility that needs to be addressed immediately (Dhavan, 2019). Currently, as per the report of the Standing Committee on External Affairs on 'India and International Law including extradition treaties with foreign countries, asylum issues, international cyber security and issues of financial crimes' on September 10, 2021, it was clearly indicated that India holds sovereign power in granting asylum which is granted on case to case basis and that, the Ministry of External Affairs steadfastly advocate India's stand on the concept of shared responsibility of all Sovereign countries in refugee crises developing anywhere in the world. Clearly, until the idea of shared responsibility gains momentum India will not review its take on signing any international convention or treatise ("Parliament digital library: Eighteenth report of the committee on external affairs (17th lok sabha)(2022-23) on action taken by the government on the observations/recommendations contained in the ninth report of the committee on the subject 'India and international law including extradition treaties with foreign countries, asylum issues, international cyber-security and issues of financial crimes,' " 2022) Therefore, it is even more pertinent that it develops a well framed policy structure of its own.

### **Deconstructing the Refugee Voices.**

(Spivak, 2022) in her pathbreaking work, 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' emphasized the importance of finding the voices of marginalized groups and the politics of second-hand representation (Spivak, 2022). Echoing the same notes (Sigona, 2014) in "The politics of refugee voices: Representations.' examines ongoing debates about the politics of "refugee voices" by exploring how representations, narratives, and memories shape refugees' experiences. Using a post-structuralist and critical theory framework, it challenges assumptions about the existence of a singular "refugee voice" and critiques how academic and policy discussions often overlook or fail to engage in these voices. The chapter identifies various ways in which narratives created by refugees themselves are produced and interpreted, analyzing the power dynamics that influence these narratives. This chapter emphasizes how memorialization and commemoration shape how refugee narratives are amplified and suppressed (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh et al., 2014). Taking cues from (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh et al., 2014) work the current study assimilates and analyzes snippets of these refugee voices available as primary or secondary data in various formats and weighs in the sociocultural and economic impacts on Afghan Muslim Refugees.

### **Socio-cultural Impact:**

The concepts of acculturation, sociocultural integration, sense of belonging, and social networks have been utilized as one of the theoretical and conceptual frameworks of the study. Acculturation is the dual process of cultural and

psychological change that occurs as a result of contact between two or more cultural groups and their individual members. At the group level, this involves changes in social structures, institutions, and cultural practices. At the individual level, it involves changes in a person's behavioral repertoire (Berry, 2006). When Abedin conducted an empirical study of Afghan refugee women in Sweden, he observed socio-cultural practices, such as food preferences, recipes, observation of festivities and rituals, dressing, styling, jewelry, language, literature, and music. Everything was added to the experience of belonging and connected to the idea of home. In order to initiate acculturation and increase adaptability, this historical-cultural continuum needed to be fractured to incorporate aspects of the host communities. Improving language skills, ensuring access to affordable housing, fostering family reunification, and reducing barriers to healthcare are critical to make acculturation possible. Ethnic communities and familial support remain pivotal for easing the transition, fostering resilience, and enhancing mental health. The findings further revealed that language proficiency is considered the key factor for sociocultural integration among participants (Abedin, 2018). In contrast, San Martin opines that the sociocultural impact functions as a two-way street between host communities and refugees. Many developing host communities often experience various forms of sociocultural shifts, including challenges to their sense of identity and heightened visibility of ethnic, religious, racial, linguistic, or ideological tensions between refugees and local populations. The presence of refugees alone can influence the sociocultural dynamics of the host community, potentially altering its ethnic composition. If the influx is substantial, it may be perceived by some as a threat to a nation's cultural norms and values. Among the challenges are language and cultural differences, which can lead not only to miscommunication but also, on a deeper level, to issues like racism, ethnocentrism, and xenophobia—phenomena increasingly observed in many developing nations today (Martin, 1993).

#### **Mental Health, Anxiety and Patriarchy:**

The interconnectedness between deteriorating mental health Post-Traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) stemming from alienation due to forced displacement and uprooting from the homeland can hardly be undermined. The gradual depletion of culture combined with a severe existential crisis considerably hampers the acculturation of refugees, leading to trauma, stress, depression, and anxiety (Kartal et al., 2018). However, using the Vancouver Index of Acculturation (Ryder et al., 2000) and Hopkins Symptom Checklist (Mollica et al., 1992), Kurt and his fellow scientist established that experiencing traumatic incidents does not necessarily hamper the capacity of refugees to develop relationships with host community members, although the impact of the native refugee culture is considerably depleted (Kurt et al., 2023). On the contrary, when faced with bigger concerns pertaining to survival, they are forced to mobilize their coping mechanisms to deal with psychological distress and initiate acculturation (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Shishehgar's empirical research suggests that refugees, particularly women, are vulnerable to mental health issues. They are reportedly at a greater risk of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, and anxiety related to lack of social support, poverty, poor health conditions, and discrimination (Shishehgar et al., 2016). Further, refugee women are soft victims of raging domestic abuse (Bhuyan et al., 2010), patriarchal domination, 'double marginalization' (Soleimani & Zarrinjooee, 2014), and sex trafficking (Gupta & Kedia, 2018).

#### **Economic Aspects:**

"The people fleeing Afghanistan (to India) are the educated middle class. They are mostly artists, filmmakers, and government employees, who are threatened by the Taliban. The life expenses are similar to Kabul in Delhi, which is not the case in any European city." – Reyaz (Zaffar, n.d.). Ideological clashes, communal violence, and political changes in guards are not the only primary factors that contribute to the birth of refugees (Baha, 1986). Recognizing economic persecution and financial volatility as significant threats to life and a major reason for migration is perhaps long overdue (Ramos, 2011). Unfortunately, the Indian Citizenship Act or the newly implemented CAA failed to address such issues, leaving refugees in a socio-political limbo. The economic aspects of the Citizenship Amendment Act on Afghanistan minorities in India are critical and require comprehensive analysis. Asylum seekers are stripped off from basic human rights, such as the availability of food and safe drinking water, causing severe food insecurity (Pakravan-Charvadeh et al., 2021) and scarcity of sanitation.

This study highlights the strong connection between education and employment among refugees. Without a solid educational background, it is difficult for refugees to secure jobs that meet their needs in host countries' labor markets. In less-developed nations, where educational funding and scholarships for refugees are scarce, individuals

are often forced to prioritize earning enough to cover basic necessities such as food and shelter, while attempting to finance education for themselves or their children. Additional barriers to continuing education in a new country include stringent language requirements and lack of recognition or documentation of previous academic qualifications. This dynamic and often unpredictable set of challenges makes it difficult for refugees to secure employment that values their prior education or recognizes their potential (Jafari, 2021). These stringent educational opportunities, linguistic barriers, and a lack of employability lead to consensual or forceful sex trafficking (Pavlish, 2007). Contextually, as thousands of flee Afghanistan and India work to evacuate both their citizens and refugees, the future of India-Afghanistan trade—valued at over a billion dollars—faces uncertainty. Afghanistan is primarily an agrarian country that relies heavily on the export of spices and dry fruits, such as anjeer, walnuts, almonds, apricot, green and black raisins, aromatic asafoetida, and figs, which have been severely affected by the political deadlock. This significantly reduces the hope that refugees will be reinstated in their homelands. With trade coming to a standstill and limited available alternatives, sustaining livelihoods will become increasingly challenging for Afghans in the near future (Moret, 2023). India relies on Afghanistan for approximately 85% of its dry fruit, along with many distinctive species. Afghanistan's exports to India include fresh fruits, dry fruits, and spices, whereas India exports goods such as garments, pharmaceuticals, medical equipment, computers, hardware, cement, sugar, and synthetic fibers. However, with trade routes closed and no agreement yet between the Afghan government and the Taliban, the prices of dry fruits in India surged two- to threefold in just a week, creating challenges for both traders and consumers (India Today). The fine trade balance, which is already loose, can be severely affected by the CAA and widespread Islamophobia.

#### Coining the The 'Kabuliwala' Syndrome:

It is pertinent to understand the genesis of the term kabuliwala before delving into the syndrome aspect. Immortalized in Rabindranath Tagore's short story, *The Kabuliwala* or the Afghan moneylender cum moneylender is often depicted in studies of rural and urban India as an unwelcome outsider. *The Englishmen*, a Calcutta-based daily of the colonial era, described them as barbaric predatory moneylenders, who exploited the poor for profit. Initially, a peasant is persuaded or pressured to purchase an inexpensive item, with the seller casually assuring them that the payment can be made later. This arrangement suits the buyer, who is unaccustomed to planning ahead and often forgets the transaction. However, the accommodating merchant eventually returns, now transformed into an unrelenting creditor, demanding repayment—perhaps 20 rupees for a piece of cloth that would have yielded a significant profit at just one rupee. The creditor enforces payment through various means, including insults, intimidation, prolonged squatting at the debtor's doorstep, and other inventive tactics that reflect the ingenuity of such practices. Usually, the debtor gives in, but if they resist, the creditor's disruptive presence soon becomes unbearable for the neighbors, who ultimately pressure the unfortunate villager to settle the debt (*The Englishmen*).

In contrast, (Warner, 2020) offers a different perspective, as in his article on *Kabuliwala* he archives, from the late 19th century to the mid-20th century, Afghans frequently operated on the financial margins of British India, providing collateral-free loans at high interest rates to urban and rural communities excluded from traditional credit sources, such as banks, cooperative societies, and established banking networks. Far from being merely exploitative, these moneylenders offered vital micro-financial services at places and times when no other options were available. Consequently, Afghan moneylending when viewed as a whole sheds light on the diverse and interconnected nature of credit relationships among the working poor during the colonial period. These operations also reveal how social and cultural factors shaped both these financial interactions and their perceptions of the imperial government and its allies (Weiner, 1998).

Despite these sociocultural hostilities, India has always been a diplomatic ally to Afghanistan, resulting in refugees trickling in for over the past 40 years. With the CAA in motion, these diasporic communities are suddenly uprooted again, with no future hope of social integration, the promise of citizenship, or returning to safety in their original homeland. The Right Wing fanned Islamophobia, which finds embodiment through CAA, has rekindled the colonial stereotype of the predatory *Kabuliwala*, who is an outright threat to domestic security and a social outcast polluting the native culture of India. This article inquires into behavioral traits, hegemonic marginalization, social ostracization that went into the making of this *Kabuliwala* stereotype, and the state instilled deep rooted fear of the 'other' that could be termed as the *Kabuliwala* syndrome. This syndrome is similar to an epidemic that eats into the

constitutionally guaranteed secularist milieu of the country, obstructing organic acculturation and undermining attempts at a transnational approach. Therefore, the article is based on the theoretical framework of the concepts of acculturation (Berry, 2006) and transnationalism (Vertovec, 2001), as it is the only peaceful and progressive path to be paved for the future.

### **OBJECTIVES**

The Present study considers three well-defined objectives:

1. To codify and deconstruct the concept of Kabuliwala syndrome and add it to mainstream discourse.
2. To identify the sociological, cultural, and economic aspects of Afghan Muslims affected by the introduction of CAA.
3. To propose a policy framework for the non-refoulment and integration of refugees after the CAA.

### **HYPOTHESIS**

Based on the above literature review the following hypotheses are framed:

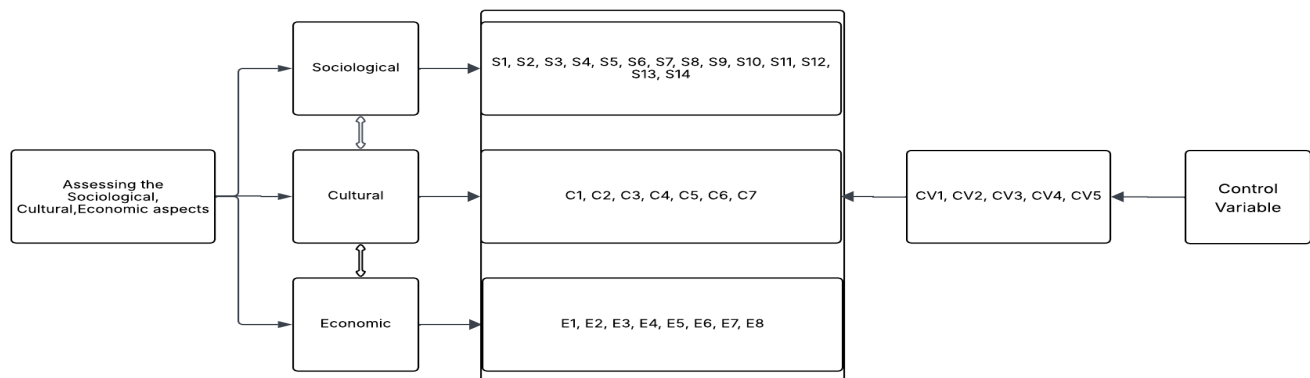
$H_0$ : The CAA has no association with the sociological, cultural, and economic aspects of Afghan Muslims in India.

$H_1$ : The CAA is associated with the sociological, cultural, and economic aspects of Afghan Muslims in India.

### **METHODS**

To test this hypothesis, the present study considers a series of 30 published interviews of Afghan Muslims staying in India on renowned articles for a period of 10 years ranging from 2014-2023. To address these objectives, the present paper has conducted a wide range of content analysis using traditional text analysis techniques on articles published to assess the sociological, cultural, and economic aspects of Afghan Muslims residing in India after the announcement of the Citizenship Amendment Act, 2014. The present study has attempted to cluster texts from the articles analyzed used as samples and identify the significant parameters taken as a proxy to gauge the sociological, cultural, and economic aspects after using standard statistical tools and techniques to establish their significance. This study employed the linguistic tradition (Ryan & Bernard, 2000) of text analysis, which considers text as an object of analysis. The present study considered both humanist tradition and positivist tradition for the search of meaning and interpretation from the articles (texts) analyzed, further reducing those texts to codes that represent concepts and applying standard quantitative methods to explore the relationships among the codes. Sociological, cultural, and economic aspects are first mapped with a set of parameters coded for analytical purposes that can be used as a proxy measure. Following this, these coded parameters were then mapped with the set of words and their synonymous words to measure the frequency of words reflecting the sociological, cultural, and economic aspects. The compiled dataset of 30 articles was then processed using the standard methodology of the mean standardization method to compute the composite index and check its robustness, as well as the indices method. Furthermore, to measure the strength and direction of the relationship between the parameters, the Karl Pearson's correlation coefficient was used, where the value ranging from  $\pm 0.75-1$  is considered highly correlated,  $\pm 0.50-0.749$  is considered moderately high, and  $\pm 0-0.499$  is considered low. To test the hypothesis about the degree of association between the cross parameters Chi-Square test of association of attributes (2x2) has been used. The reliability of the dataset and for the internal consistency of the parameters Cronbach alpha coefficient reliability test has been employed.

Fig -1: Flow Diagram



Source(s): Author's own compilation

Table 1: List of Parameters and Codes

Variables	Parameters	Code
Sociological	Alienation	S1
	Religious Discrimination	S2
	Refugee status	S3
	Mental Health	S4
	Domestic Abuse	S5
	Human rights	S6
	Fear of talking to the media	S7
	Security issue	S8
	Violence	S9
	Vulnerable	S10
	Citizenship	S11
	Apathy and Distrust	S12
	Religious Conversion	S13
	Displaced	S14
Cultural	Stereotype	C1
	Food and recipe	C2
	Heritage	C3
	Jewellery and clothing	C4
	Islamophobia and Kabuliwallah	C5
	Linguistic barrier	C6
	Hospitality	C7
Economic	Illiteracy	E1
	Lack of basic amenities	E2
	Unemployment	E3
	Loss, bilateral trade	E4

	Handicraft	E5
	No work permit	E6
	Penalty	E7
	Poverty	E8
	Resettlement	CV1
Control Variable	Registering with police/ blue paper	CV2
	War	CV3
	Justice	CV4
	UNHCR	CV5
Source(s): Author's own compilation		

Table 2: List of defining words

Variables	Code	Defining Words
Sociological	S1	Isolation, loneliness, estrangement, detachment, otherness, separation, exclusion, outsider status, disconnection, disaffection, disenchantment, detachment, alienation.
	S2	Marginalization, islamophobia, non-secular, Bias, Prejudice, Differential treatment, Bigotry, Religious intolerance, religious marginalization, Discrimination against religions, Non-discrimination on the grounds of religion, communal disharmony
	S3	Asylum seekers, stateless, alienation, political asylum, outcast, exile, fugitive, existential crisis, loss of identity, ethnic amnesia
	S4	Depression, amnesia, fear, abuse, psychological violence, isolation, despair, hopelessness, suicide. Frustration
	S5	Sexual violence, marital rape, intimate partner violence, patriarchy, mental health disorder, perversion, sex slave, egoistic backlash, identity crisis.
	S6	Independence, tolerance, freedom, recognition, autonomy, sovereignty, self-government, self-determination, protection, home rule, civil liberty, individuality.
	S7	Threat, vulnerability, fear of punishment, silencing, extortion, victimization
	S8	Threat, vulnerability, extortion, exposure to criminality, violence, oppression
	S9	Threat, extortion, abuse, rape, silencing, deportation, oppression, intolerance, ethnic cleansing, apathy, discrimination
	S10	Threat, extortion, identity crisis, violence, alienation, oppression
	S11	Legal rights, political identity, protection, identity, homeland, historicity, legacy, belonging
	S12	Marginalization, alienation, victimization, islamophobia, religious persecution, political ostracization, ghettoed

	S13	Islamophobia, ethnic cleansing, oppression, cultural marginalization, non-secular, communalism, discrimination, religious nepotism
	S14	Isolation, loneliness, estrangement, detachment, otherness, separation, exclusion, outsider status, disconnection, disaffection, disenchantment, detachment, alienation.
Cultural	C1	Ideological oppression, hegemony, objectification, homogenizing, existential crisis, loss of individuality identity, alienation
	C2	Cultural identity, memory, homeland, acculturation, diversity
	C3	Ethnic identity, Cultural identity, memory, homeland, diversity,
	C4	Cultural identity, ethnic memory, homeland, acculturation, diversity, roots, ritual. Individuality, style, fashion
	C5	Stereotype, islamophobia, hegemonic fear and anxiety, isolation, deportation, extortion, majoritarian oppression, existential crisis, ethnic cleansing, victimization, alienation, religious violence and discrimination
	C6	Cultural marginalization, lack of communication, stereotype, silencing
	C7	Friendliness, welcome, helpfulness, neighbourliness, warmth, warm-heartedness, Kindness, kind-heartedness, congeniality
Economic	E1	Lack of education, vulnerability, poverty, extortion
	E2	Health, hygiene, illiteracy, poverty, scarcity of food, unemployment, displaced, deteriorating mental health, space
	E3	Illiteracy, poverty, lack of documentation, poor habitation condition, no work permit, language barrier, stereotype
	E4	Jittery import export policy, closed trade routes, hostile dealers, inflation in economy, economic backlash, dry market collapse
	E5	Small scale economy, ethnic continuation, cultural revival, rebooting economic measure, craftsmanship, art and tradition, heritage
	E6	Unemployment, poverty, extortion, language barrier, hostility, no livelihood, ghettoed, penalty
	E7	Victimization, extortion, no human rights, lack of legislative transparency, poverty, stereotype, no work permit, inhabitable conditions, vandalism
	E8	Illiteracy, unemployment, no work permit, inhabitable conditions, lingual barrier, religious discrimination, political debarment
Control Variable	CV1	Isolation, loneliness, estrangement, detachment, otherness, separation, exclusion, outsider status, disconnection, disaffection, disenchantment, detachment, alienation.
	CV2	License, permit, belonging, deporting, legalization, citizenship, home
	CV3	Political violence, religious dogmatism, refugee, escape, international polices, extremism, majoritarianism, totalitarian government

CV4	Citizenship, secularism, tolerance, acculturation, ethnic preservation, employment opportunities, human rights
CV5	License, permit, belonging, deporting, legalization, citizenship, hope

Source(s): Author's own compilation

## RESULTS

Table 3: Results of Cronbach Alpha Coefficient

Variables	Parameters	Code	Cronbach Alpha Coefficient
Sociological	Alienation	S1	0.8856
	Religious Discrimination	S2	
	Refugee status	S3	
	Mental Health	S4	
	Domestic Abuse	S5	
	Human rights	S6	
	Fear of talking to the media	S7	
	Security issue	S8	
	Violence	S9	
	Vulnerable	S10	
	Citizenship	S11	
	Apathy and Distrust	S12	
	Religious Conversion	S13	
	Displaced	S14	
Cultural	Stereotype	C1	
	Food and recipe	C2	
	Heritage	C3	
	Jewellery and clothing	C4	
	Islamophobia and Kabuliwallah	C5	
	Linguistic barrier	C6	
	Hospitality	C7	
Economic	Illiteracy	E1	
	Lack of basic amenities	E2	
	Unemployment	E3	
	Loss, bilateral trade	E4	
	Handicraft	E5	
	No work permit	E6	
	Penalty	E7	
	Poverty	E8	

Control Variable	Resettlement	CV1
	Registering with police	CV2
	War	CV3
	Justice	CV4
	UNHCR	CV5

Source(s): Author's own compilation

Table 3 reflects the value of Cronbach's alpha coefficients for all parameters representing the sociological, cultural, and economic aspects as a whole. The coefficient value of 0.8856 confirms that the data has high reliability, signifying internal consistency.

Table 4: Significant Parameters

Code	Parameters	Indices Method	Composite	Rank
		Score	Index	
S3	Refugee status	93.33	0.92	2
S6	Human rights	53.33	0.53	4
S9	Violence	53.33	0.53	4
S11	Citizenship	93.33	0.93	1
S14	Displaced	66.67	0.67	3
C2	Food and recipe	20.00	0.20	4
C3	Heritage	40.00	0.40	2
C4	Jewellery and clothing	47.00	0.47	1
C5	Islamophobia and Kabuliwallah	26.67	0.27	3
E1	Illiteracy	60.00	0.60	1
E2	Lack of basic amenities	33.00	0.33	3
E3	Unemployment	40.00	0.40	2
E5	Handicraft	33.00	0.33	3
E6	No work permit	33.00	0.33	3
CV1	Resettlement	47.00	0.47	2
CV5	Registering with police	67.00	0.67	1

Source(s): Author's own compilation

After computing the composite index of each parameter taken in the study, ensuring the mean standardization method, it was found that five, four, five, and two parameters from the sociological, cultural, economic, and control variables were significant. The significant parameters for each aspect were ranked. It was found that S11, S3, S14, S6, and S9 were the most significant parameters in terms of sociological aspects, meaning that citizenship, refugee status, displacement, violence, and human rights were considered to be major concerns. It is also found that C4, C3, C5, and C2 are the most significant parameters when it comes to analyzing cultural aspects, meaning that jewelry and clothing, heritage, food, and recipes are the most valued aspects by Afghan Muslims as they have continued the legacy of the then Kabul and Afghanistan; they also feel that Islamophobia and Kabuliwallah have made normal people look down upon them, developing it as a syndrome. It was also observed that E1, E3, E2, E5, and E6 were the most significant parameters in the analysis of the economic aspects of Afghan Muslims. The results confirm that this uncertainty of identity has caused the population not to receive proper education, leading to illiteracy and

unemployment. Their lack of identity deprived them of their work and basic amenities from the government. They also feel that their earnings from handicrafts, which are a blend of cultures, will also be affected. To check for areas of negotiation, this study considers a few control variables, within which CV5 and CV1 are considered to be the most significant parameters. This suggests that Afghan Muslims consider registering with the police every time causes them a sense of insecurity, and also consider the policy of resettlement a significant way out of their problem.

Table 5: Significant correlation coefficients

Parameters	Parameters	Correlation Coefficient	p-value of chi-square
S1	S13	0.935359	0.005*
S1	S14	0.775514	0.015*
S1	E1	0.756347	0.283
S1	E3	0.863594	0.049*
S1	E8	0.814241	0.001*
S2	E1	0.797924	0.158
S2	E7	0.906391	0.005*
S3	CV5	0.877189	0.141
S5	E6	0.914076	0.051*
S6	C1	0.987479	0.184
S6	CV3	0.987479	0.020*
S6	CV4	0.931389	0.003*
S8	E2	0.779296	0.012*
S9	CV2	0.797482	0.017*
S13	E1	0.819845	0.010*
S13	E3	0.916624	0.002*
C1	C6	0.803565	0.053*
C1	C7	0.969248	0.001*
C2	C3	0.853372	0.000*
C5	E8	0.925889	0.001*
C6	C7	0.846826	0.005*
E1	E3	0.751489	0.059*
E1	E7	0.912106	0.010*
CV3	CV4	0.946602	0.001*

\*p-value at 5% level of significance.

Source(s): Author's own compilation

To test the hypothesis regarding the degree of association between the cross parameters, the chi-square test of association of attributes ( $2 \times 2$ ) was used. Table 5 provides information only on the parameters that have a strong/high degree of association among them, supported by the p-value to establish their significance. S1 and S13, which are coded for alienation and religious conversion, have a positive association, meaning that the population is considering religious conversion to deal with the problem of alienation. Similarly, it is observed that S1 (alienation) has a high positive correlation with S14 (displacement), E1(illiteracy), E3(loss of bilateral trade), and E8 (poverty),

which signifies that marginalization and otherness are directly related to a lack of educational opportunities. This, in turn, affects economic independence, challenging the hope of sustainable livelihoods and negotiations from a position of power. The diplomatic hostility further stuns bilateral trade (especially dry fruits and spices), resulting in the economy plummeting further, adding to the otherization. As Table 5 shows, S2 (religious discrimination) also has a positive correlation with factors E1(illiteracy) and E7(penalty), clearly indicating the raging Islamophobia prevalent in the country, fuelled by the extreme right-wing government, currently in power. It is also intriguing to note how the economic and educational backwardness of Muslim Afghan refugees is politicized to woo Hindu Majoritarian flagbearers, and how Islamic refugees are being penalized in a country founded on the principles of secularism and tolerance. Further, the increased value of the correlation coefficient between S3(Refugee status) and C5 (UNHCR) suggests that India lacks a properly formulated policy framework regarding the rights and status of refugees because India is not a signatory to the 1951 UN Refugee Convention. Therefore, refugees remain vulnerable and exposed to extortion by various private agencies that are often involved in crimes such as human trafficking. The organization that serves as the only ray of hope for these communities is the United Nations High Commissioner of Refugees (UNHCR) for voluntary repatriation, local integration or resettlement to a third country. However, the minimum waiting period for visa interview can span up to two years, leaving them desolate, incapacitated and fragile. The high positive correlation between S5 (Domestic Abuse) and E6 (No Work Permit) reflects the deteriorating mental health of refugees due to extreme economic and existential crises, which finds its ramification through acts of domestic violence. Continuing on the same note, the high positive correlation between the variables S6(Human Rights) and C1(stereotype), CV3 (War), and CV4 (Justice) indicates that ethno-political war leads to homogenizing and stereotyping of refugees based on religious biases, resulting in a delay and often denial of justice and deliverance of basic human rights. Interlaced with the previous issue is the current correlation coefficient value between parameters S8 (Security Issue) and E2 (lack of basic amenities), hinting at the interdependency of basic amenities such as proper habitation, sanitation, food, medical supply, job opportunities, access to education, and security issues. Refugees deprived of these basic amenities are left vulnerable and fall prey to disease, starvation, mental disorder, abuse, extortion, human trafficking, violence, and deportation.

The factors affecting the coefficient value, suggesting the interconnectedness between S9(violence) and CV2 (Blue Paper), is somewhat similar to that of S3(Refugee Status) and CV5 (UNHCR). The main link between all these parameters is the “Blue Paper,” blue paper is the local term given to the registration sheet which has to be obtained from the UNHCR on arrival to India that officially confirms the refugee status and ensures chances of resettlement or deportation to a third country for asylum seeking. The raging Islamophobia and widespread intolerance maneuvering the political landscape of India is clearly hinted at by the coefficient value connecting the variables S13 (Religious Conversion), E1(illiteracy), and E3(unemployment). This is like a state orchestrated, ethnic cleansing, where refugees are forced to convert in other religions to avoid being vandalized, unemployment, and illiteracy only adds to their vulnerability; the high coefficient value between C1(Kabuliwala stereotype) and C6(linguistic barrier), suggesting that apart from other social and cultural asymmetry, the linguistic barrier and gaps in communication significantly add to the building of the Kabuliwala stereotype; however, in order to break the stereotype of the violent predatory Muslim refugee, the Afghans have tried to demonstrate their hospitality through their social interactions, shift in cultural behavioral patterns, attempts at inclusivity through shared experience of food, fashion, heritage, and authentic recipes, as demonstrated by the coefficient values of the interconnected variables C7(hospitality), C2(Food and Recipe), and C3(heritage). The deep connection between C5(Islamophobia) and E8(poverty) has also been previously dealt with, and the raging religious discrimination and lack of properly structured refugee policies have left these people in a financial limbo, as they have no work permit or scope to grow relevant skills for employment generation. The high coefficient values E1 (Illiteracy), E3(unemployment), and E7(Penalty) further testimonies the aforementioned claim and often leads to refugees being heavily penalized by the government, as they seek desperate means to earn a livelihood. History indicates that CV3(war) and CV4(justice) have been two sides of the same coin, especially for the common mass. The Rohingya crisis, ethnic clashes in Bangladesh, Palestine, Sri Lanka, and Afghanistan have left millions of people displaced, homeless, facing severe humanitarian injustice and extermination.

## DISCUSSION

Thus far, the paper has addressed its first two objectives by categorically defining the traits of Kabuliwala syndrome and the socio-cultural and economic aspects that went into its making. Further, as the coefficient table suggests, the most significant social factors were alienation, religious discrimination and conversion, citizenship, domestic abuse, and refugee status. Weighing the cultural factors of linguistic barriers and islamophobia seems to be quite stir. Whereas, the crucial economic factors are unemployment and illiteracy. Based on the coefficient values and interconnectedness of the various parameters, the paper concludes by proposing few pointers that could be weighed in by policy makers while attempting to formulate Refugee policies for India in the wake of CAA.

First, a nation as divergent as India, with a long diasporic history, must have clear compartmentalization of criteria that determine or label an individual or group as a refugee. Contextually, Michelle Foster, in his path-breaking work *International Refugee Law and Socio-Economic Rights: Refuge from Deprivation*, has significantly posed the issue that violation of socio-economic rights should also be considered persecution and must be remembered while framing international policies for refugees (Foster 64). Both diachronic and synchronic factors must be mapped out while determining refugee status, and Socio-Economic Persecution must be given equal weightage compared to religious allegiance while formulating non-refoulment refugee policies.

Second, the constitution of India guarantees the prevalence and precedence of a secular environment in the country; therefore, religious freedom and tolerance should be preserved at all costs, and forced conversion and religious persecution must be prevented and penalized through a legislative policy framework.

Third, proper institutions should be developed to impart education, skill enhancement, and linguistic training to generate employment opportunities, so that refugees can contribute to the growth of GDP rather than becoming a burden on the national GDP. If delivering citizenship is a hindrance, alternative citizenship could be issued that ensures humanitarian conditions and employability, while restricting voting rights and private ownership of property. (Tiwari, 2024) rightly argues that India must frame refugee policies that are ethnologically neutral and socially impartial, with the primary focus being humanitarian considerations, economic growth, and stronger political liaisons (Tiwari, 2024). Pursuing durable solutions tailored to individual preferences and prevailing conditions, including voluntary repatriation, local integration, and resettlement, is of paramount importance. Khalid Koser in his empirical study offers a 'transnational solution' to the refugee crisis by suggesting the extension or reintroduction of quotas for resettling refugees on a formal basis in parallel with efforts to stop their illegal entry (Koser, 2007).

Finally, integrating these refugees into the existing diasporic population could ensure the enrichment of the cultural melting pot by allowing Afghan food, recipes, festivals, and literature to be incorporated within the Indian cultural milieu. This adds to the divergent diasporic communities' global influences that have already made India home. As Nicholas Van Hear opined in "Refugees, diasporas and transnationalism" while revisiting the notion of 'durable solutions' for refugees, that transnationalism itself could be one such solution to address displacement (The Oxford Handbook of Refugee and Forced Migration Studies, n.d.). Such holistic precedence of transnationalism not only spreads the word of harmony and world peace but could also help India, as a nation state, negotiate diplomatic ties, international relations, and treatise from a position of power.

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