

CHAPTER I

1. Introduction

Afghans are one of the world's most populous refugee groups who are forced to flee their country due to ongoing conflicts for more than 40 years. There are 5.7 million Afghans in five neighboring countries who need support. With 2.2 million in neighbored countries Pakistan and Iran. Another 3.5 million people have been internally displaced, fleeing their homes in search of safety (UNHCR- *Afghanistan Emergency*, n.d.). The number of persons fleeing will almost certainly increase due to the increasingly deteriorating security situation, poverty, violence, natural disasters, targeted assassinations, and lack of fulfillment of basic needs. Of those, more than 7000 refugees are in Indonesia. Out of that around 550 refugees live Surabaya, and among them number of Afghan refugees are around 230, they are living in Sidoarjo waiting for resettlement and transit to destination country almost for years. Meanwhile, the overwhelming challenge for Afghan refugees/asylum seekers in Sidoarjo is that they are trapped in uncertainty due to their inability to be resettled. They also lack formal work rights and education, which are essential for establishing sustainable livelihoods. Working irregularly in Indonesia is uncommon among refugees and asylum seekers due to the risk of exploitation and crackdowns by immigration authorities — those caught by authorities may face detention and, in some cases, deportation.

This state leads to greater conflict between them, sexual assault, and limits on movement, as well as a lack of fundamental requirements being met (Jabeen

& Awan, 2017). Furthermore, they have given up their childhood, education, and hopes in their productive years. For Afghan refugees in Medan are facing, namely limitations in access to education, employment, health facilities, mobility and the process of transferring to a recipient country (resettlement) which is indefinite, also refugee populations in general may experience significant distress from worrying about the safety of loved ones left behind. This condition raises psychological problems such as anxiety, stress, hopelessness, depression and loss of life purpose (Edriany et al., 2021). Moreover, Posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) appears to be the most common mental health disorder reported among adolescent refugees (Fazel et al., 2005).

In addition, children and adolescents living in war zones experience destruction, losses, atrocities, and threats to life, which can have devastating impacts on their wellbeing (UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), 2016). Traumatic events can have a cumulative effect, meaning that the more traumatic experiences we have, the more likely we are to develop mental health issues and their severity. Despite exposure to potentially traumatic events, not all refugees show mental health problems, thus displaying mental health resilience (Cicchetti, 2010).

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the majority of research on mental health among refugees has focused on the negative psychological consequences of these adversities, such as depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder. While mental health issues are common among refugees, a significant proportion of this population does not appear to develop these psychological disorders, and many find ways to rebuild and thrive (Walther et al., 2021). In a study on

resilience in adult refugees in Germany results indicated that self-ascriptions of resilience as a personal trait or lasting characteristic, and the role of volunteering, work, and activism for refugee causes, manifest resilience in refugees for facing adversity. Meanwhile, social support, experiencing migration as an opportunity in general and for women in particular, being a parent, and being young, are the factors that facilitate resilience (Walther et al., 2021).

Likewise, in a study (Maung et al., 2021), Burmese Refugee Women in the Midwest despite the numerous struggles and challenges they encountered in Burma, refugee camps, and throughout the resettlement process, each identified a number of strengths and coping strategies that contributed to their resilience in the face of adversity namely: social support, hopefulness and aspirations for the future, personal self-care, religious and spiritual coping, and cognitive coping.

1.2. Formulation of the Problem

Decades of war and conflict in Afghanistan due to internal and external issue and interferences has caused immense damages and negative impacts on economics, education, security and development of the country, furthermore, it also affected people's social and psychological well-being and forced people to flee their home and country as well. Core developmental activities in early childhood are connected to establishing a sense of security and trust in others, while in adolescence, it is critical for individuals to establish their own social relationships and develop their own sense of self and identity (Blakemore & Mills, 2014). Traumatic war experiences may make it difficult to do these duties, thus it's crucial to look at the developmental and existential influences of

childhood war trauma. At the same time, however, it has been established that many individuals who have faced often highly traumatic war experiences and forced migration show high functioning and do not develop psychopathology despite being at risk. These individuals are often referred to as “resilient.”

Moreover, according to the study of Von Haumeder (n.d.), in the case of Syrian refugees in Germany, in order to gain a deeper understanding of how individuals deal with adversity and showed positive development and resilience he found that: personal resources and family, faith, and community resources have significant role and all of three areas seem to be closely interrelated. In the discussion of personal resources, the importance of having a personal goal and flexibility in achieving it emerged as the dominant theme. Concentrating on such a goal appears to have a positive effect on refugees’ levels of motivation and hope. Besides, family seemed to be their main goal and motivation for instance; to provide a better future for their own children were the main reason for leaving Syria, and to financially support their families. Additionally, many Syrians share strong religious values such as faith, prayer, and spiritual practices. Religious affiliation is important for many Syrians because it is linked to tradition, culture, and heritage, and it provides a set of values, rituals, and common knowledge. Participating in religious activities appears to meet some basic existential needs for hope, belonging, worship, and celebration. Finally, social support in the community is perceived to be nurturing and facilitative of mental relief, and provides a sense of calm, solidarity, and assurance. It is strengthened through shared meals, social gatherings, mutual care, and spending long hours visiting each other. Beside internal qualities, family, and faith/religious community,

other resources such as neighbors, followed by friends (German and Syrian), and non-profit organizations and charities that provide community groups, language support, and extra food and clothing were mentioned as helpful resources.

As a result, this qualitative study examines the experiences, and resiliency among young Afghan adults who had lived through war and conflicts in Afghanistan as children and adolescents, their resilience living in Indonesia as refugees and asylum seekers.

1.3. Purpose of the Study

This study aims to understand the experiences and resilience of Afghan refugees/asylum seekers living in Indonesia.

The study aimed to examine Afghan refugees/asylum seekers experiences while facing adversities, how they showed resilience living in Indonesia.

1.4. Research Questions

This study was guided by three main research questions:

1. What adversities Afghans as refugees/asylum seekers have faced in Indonesia?
2. How did they overcome those adversities?
3. How Afghan refugees/asylum seekers showed resilience to the adversities they faced?

1.5. Significance of the Study

Considering that the number of forcibly displaced people has reached the worldwide largest number ever recorded, the need to better understand the interactions that could predict and reinforce positive adaptation under severe stress has never been greater. The present study aims to comprehend the experiences and resiliency, as well as how Afghans as refugees/asylum seekers face their challenges and adversities living in Indonesia. To the best of our knowledge there does not exist significant study on resilience of Afghan refugees particularly in Indonesia, even though Afghan refugees make the highest number among the total refugees 13,098, in Indonesia of which 7,251 comes from Afghanistan (*Fact Sheets – UNHCR Indonesia*, n.d). Thus, this study contributes to the underdeveloped body of literature on both global and culturally specific protective processes associated with resilience. And can provide profound knowledge of Afghan refugees, their obstacles, resilience and adapting which can help in developing intervention mappings for refugees.