

Afghanistan case essay sample

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Afghanistan is a country on the crossroads. The history of this trouble land is deep rooted in intrigue, wars, and conquest. As the region lies on the border between the Western Asian and South Asia, conflicts have taken a strange cultural and ethnical turns. The strategic location of Afghanistan has always sparked troubles for its inhabitants but they have always guarded their sovereignty from Tatars, Mughals, and the British Raj (Malleson, 1984, pp. 1-50). As the country is facing another crisis, it is pertinent to look into the geographical and ethnical significance of this country. Although it has always remained a witness to history of South Asia, Afghanistan never merged with the greater South Asian culture and geography. It is more attached with its South Western identity as compared to the South Asia.

There have been some recent attempts to include Afghanistan in South Asia. It has been included in the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and is now considered a part of South Asia. Pakistan and India, two major powers of South Asia, are trying to gain a strong foothold in Afghanistan. Given these circumstances, the cultural and geographical position of Afghanistan has to be determined in an accurate manner. Many historical and contemporary factors establish Afghanistan's position in the South Western Asia. They are as follows:

- Ethnical and linguistic affinity
- Geographical coherence
- Historical similarities

(Kapila, 2005)

Given the above-mentioned factors, Afghanistan shares most of its cultural, ethnical, linguistic, and geographical affinities with Southwest Asia. During the last thousand years, Afghanistan remained under the control of Persia though it later gained its independent status. Similarly, every attempt of conquest from its eastern borders was brutally quashed by Afghans.

Afghanis speak four main languages: Pashto, Dari, Uzbek, and Tajik. Dari is a mix of Persian and Pashto along with some loan words from Tajik, Mongolian, and Uzbek. Hazara tribes of Afghanistan also speak a mix of Persian and Dari. Pashtuns make up more than half of Afghanistan's population followed by Hazaras and Tajiks. All of these ethno-lingual groups have separate yet inter-twined identities. All of them trace their roots to the region that spans over Southwest Asia, including Iran.

Geographical coherence plays an even important role in ascertaining the cultural and political classification of a country. Afghanistan is surrounded by Central Asia in the north and Iran on its western borders. Its border with Pakistan is on the east and southeast. Even the border region with Pakistan is disputed, as Afghans do not accept the Durand Line that divides these two countries. Ironically, Pashtuns inhabit the border regions of Pakistan with Afghanistan and they share the same culture and language (Kapila, 2005).

Pashtuns do not consider themselves a part of South Asia. In fact, they were not a part of India before the British Raj. The borders of Afghanistan were extended to all Pashto speaking areas of modern day Pakistan. It was only the Sikhs and later British who gained control of some of these areas and made them a part of British Empire. The actual boundaries of South Asia

start from the Punjab and Sindh provinces of Pakistan. Baluchistan is a part of broader Gulf region and its culture and language is in harmony with that of the southern Iran.

Although Afghanistan has been included in the South Asian region and there are even formal contracts, including SAARC, that cements its position in South Asia, the whole exercise looks out of context and misplaced.

Afghanistan shares a long history with Southwest Asia and is an integral part of that region. Although it has diverse ethnic and cultural landscapes, Afghanistan still is a border between South and Southwest Asia. Another scenario of Afghanistan's geographical and political affiliation can be determined through its borderline position. It has historically served as the buffer zone between the Persian and Mughal Empire. During the reign of Abdur Rehman in the nineteenth century, British followed the same rules as set by Mughals that said that Afghan lands would remain independent and their sovereignty will be accepted. British reached this conclusion after fighting three long wars and losing hundreds of thousands of soldiers. Thus, this historical lesson was learnt in a gory manner.

In conclusion, it can be safely assumed that Afghanistan is on the border of South and South west Asia. It shares its ethnic, lingual, and cultural ties with Southwest Asia and serves as a corridor to South Asia. It has also served as the buffer zone between these two regions. Changing the status of Afghanistan, that it has acquired over centuries, is like denying a universal truth. Additionally, its role in Southwest or Central Asia would be more beneficial for the region (Blank, 2009).

Works Cited

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