

Asylum seeker children in need



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Leaving out 2003, UK has seen a staggering increase in the numbers of refugees and asylum-seekers every year in the past decade. The Home Office reported a mind-boggling 103, 000 applications for asylum (including dependents) in 2002 alone. A statistical report issued in 2004 by the Home Office announced a dip in these numbers by 42% in 2003. However, even with this decrease, 60, 045 applications, with 10, 640 applications stating dependents, were filed in that year. Stricter immigration controls may be the reason for this drop in numbers.

Somalia, Iraq, Sri Lanka, FRY (Former Republic of Yugoslavia), Afghanistan, Turkey, Pakistan, China, India and Iran, in that order, were the countries most of these applications came from. Despite the large number of immigrants seeking leave to enter and stay, only a minority get awarded the refugee status or exceptional leave to remain.

A major challenge is presented in terms of meeting the needs of these immigrants and refugees is their children's access to education which is part of their statutory rights. In a highly competitive environment, these children may be considered a potential threat to school standards and levels of achievement, by institutions and educational establishments. However, schools are given the option to exclude asylum-seekers' and refugee pupils' scores from the schools' overall performance indicator if these individuals have been in the country for less than two years. The same exclusion law applies to anyone whose first language of instruction is not English.

Such a policy can bring a good change if it seeks to help such students be welcomed and accepted at their respective institutions without the apprehension of the schools as to the hampering of school performance. However, on the flip side, such a decision might also result in the schools

taking a lax attitude towards these children and deem them unfit for similar prospects as the other, regular students.

The fact is that more than the basic needs of these children need to be catered to, as evidenced by the data that shows that children of refugees/asylum seekers are often victims of racial hatred, with the local communities often treating them as pariahs.

Globalization is a reality of our times, as well as having a long history, and it is a good idea to see its process vis-à-vis the challenges of asylum. It is because of globalization that people from a certain area in the world decide to move to another area, despite the financial burden thereof. What is more, such people always bring their cultural nuances and ideals. Organizations that relate to border-control and integration of immigrants also deteriorate as a result of the onslaught on nation-state dominion and independence resulting from immigration. Consequently, many variant groups of migrants are obscured into one group, resulting in an alteration of the substance and applications of culture associated with immigrants, making it difficult for communities to be formed.

Conversely, Europe and North America actually cause what can be referred to as “ brain drain” making it possible for people from countries where globalization is hampered to come to their land. This phenomenon has founded complex social, technological and cultural networks, helping in a smooth flow of immigrants and asylum seekers from under developed countries to have a link with the industrialized nations.

It is observed that while globalization is established on the principle of free flow of a number of elements, including but not limited to services, finance, highly qualified man power, information and commodities, however, such

freedom is not extended to people who would benefit the most from it, for instance those who are financially worse off, who need training or who want to escape tyranny and persecution they face in their home countries.

Globalization helps people to migrate, that much is true, but such immigration is actually controlled by the richest nations of the world whereby they only extend this freedom to certain "choice" migration hopefuls. It is interesting that the challenge to asylum lays bare this paradox of the globalization process.