

## People Across Durand Line: Perception of Policy of Border Management

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### ABSTRACT

*Pakistan and Afghanistan share 2430-kilometer-long border. The border has remained contested between these two countries since decades. Especially, the reluctance of successive governments of Afghanistan to recognize it as legitimate border. However, the stance of Pakistan is the other way around. Recently, Pakistan has devised a policy of border management along the Durand Line. This policy includes different visa restrictions, border fencing, and monitoring of crossing points. This study explores the impact of border management policy on the people residing across the Durand Line, on the Afghan side. The current study examine the perception of Afghan people on Pakistan's policy, "the north western border management policy." In order to accomplish the study objective, data was collected through convenience sampling by interviewing 20 different government and ordinary people, crossing the border, 45 questionnaires were also distributed among the people living near to border. The result was then analyzed through Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The results revealed that Afghan have strong reservations over the newly formulated north western border management policy. The restriction of visa to Pakistan has arisen vehement abhorrence in the Afghan public and negatively impacted the relationship between Afghanistan and Pakistan. The restriction has also raised the problem, due to which, the movement of people from both sides has minimized up to a great extent. The new border management policy has also badly affected the trade between Pakistan and Afghanistan. Millions of Afghan people have also suffered due to the new border management policy because most of the families are spending their lives jointly in Pakistan and Afghanistan. In this study, only the perception of Afghan has been evaluated, future research may be conducted to check the perception of Pakistanis over north western border management policy.*

**Keywords:** Pak-Afghan border, Torkham

## INTRODUCTION

For more than half a century, there has been a consistent distrust between the governments of Pakistan and Afghanistan. Although there have been some short spans of cordial relations between the two countries in different regimes, they could not be transformed into an everlasting relationship. The rise and fall in the intensity of the relationship has never allowed the neighboring countries to become good friends. Amongst others, one of the significant causes of the tension is the issue of “Durand Line”. It is a borderline that determines the boundary between Pakistan and Afghanistan. In fact, the current intensity of tension between regional neighbors can be traced down to the era when this line was demarcated after the Anglo-Afghan wars in the nineteenth century.

Although the history of British interference in Afghan soil spilled over centuries, it was severe during the administration period of Amanullah Khan, who took charge of state Affairs after his father, Amir Habibullah Khan, who passed away in February 1919. After ascending to power, he declared the country independent and sovereign. This declaration is a testimony to his anti-British stance and an attempt to stop the British Indian government from interfering in Afghanistan’s affairs. In addition, he also did not accept the border separation conducted in the previous Afghan regime forced by the British Indian government (Biswas, 2013). After sensing British exhaustion in World War I and engagement in the Middle East, Amanullah Khan challenged the legitimacy of Durandline. He termed it illegal by stating that this was agreed by previous rulers under duress (Iqbal, 2010).

After the division of Indian subcontinent in two states, India and Pakistan, the Afghan government of that time objected the legitimacy of Durand line and inclusion of areas beyond the line in Pakistan. In 1948, the relations between the two countries become so intense and critical that Pakistan increased its military forces on the Durand line with Afghanistan. The Afghan government called Loya Jirga 1949, which resolved against the Durand Line and unilaterally cancelled all the treaties agreed upon with the British Indian government. As a result to this resolution, the government of Afghanistan rejected the Duran line and refused the Durand Line as a legitimate international boundary (Biswas, 2013).

Similarly, successive governments of Afghanistan had remained reluctant to consider the Durand line as a legitimate international border. The pro-Pakistan governments of *Mujahideen* and later of the *Taliban*, in the last decade of the previous century, were hesitant to declare it an international border, mainly due the international

pressure of the people and the sensitivity of the matter. The democratic government formed in 2001 was also unwilling to agree with Pakistan on the Durand issue. In 2012, the Afghan government denied every statement claiming Durand line as permanent border and said that the status of border is of immense importance for Afghan people and showed their firm commitment towards the historic stand (Line, 2012). On the contrary, Pakistan has never agreed to the Afghan stand and has been pressuring successive Afghan governments to recognize the line as an international border (Kakar, 2006).

After 9/11 and the formation of a democratic government in Afghanistan, both the countries have blamed each other for the sponsoring terrorism on their sides of the border. For instance, Pakistan claimed that India is using Afghans soil against them and is financing and training the Bloch separatist rebels and the *Tehreek e Taliban* Pakistan. Similarly, Afghan side claimed that Pakistan is not sincere with the stability and peace in Afghanistan and is supporting the Tehreek Taliban Afghanistan and the Haqqanimilitant groups (Jabeen, Mazhar&Goraya, 2010).

In this backdrop, border management has remained a concern for both the countries, especially for Pakistan. In this regard, Pakistan has started an ambitious project of border fencing and crossing points' management. The border management policy varies from region to region and country to country. The border management policy of any country depends upon its regional situation and its relation with its neighbors. For example, USA has different border management policy with respect to Canada and Mexico. As far as the models of border management are concerned, there are few internationally practiced models such as the one adopted by the Indian government that prevents entry into the country and to curtail movement into its territory, it deploys heavy armed forces on its border. This model is referred to as "Uni-lateral Approach Model". The second one is adopted by the US and is known as 'Smart Borders', it includes number of system of scrutiny to control the crowding alongside sea ports, air and land of entry. The 3<sup>rd</sup> one is revealed in Turkey's policy of border management with Syria; according to this model the movement of refugees is open while the fighters are dealt strictly. This model is called as "Open door Policy Model". In addition to the above models, there is an open model practiced by EU, where upon the borders are open between the countries and citizens of one state are free to move into another state (Iqbal, Conference Proceedings 2018).

The government of Pakistan declared in January, 2017 that all the Pakistani and Afghans will cross the border through valid visa on passport except residents of Landikotal (They can use Rahdari “permit” for crossing border. Frequent meetings were held between Pakistan and Afghanistan high official. They discussed over how to direct and control different kinds of illegal activities on both the sides. As far as Pak-Afghan border management is concerned, Pakistan started its border fencing in 2017 unilaterally. The Afghan Foreign Ministry in retaliation said “We have clearly stated that any type of unilateral actions taken along the Durand Line without the agreement of the government of Afghanistan [are] going to be ineffective, impractical and impossible” (Gul, personal communication, 2017).

The Afghan Ministry of Borders and Tribal Affairs urged as well to stop fencing the disputed border. The deputy ministry of Afghan border and Tribal argued, “Durand Line is not Afghanistan’s international and authorized border with Pakistan. We are in close contact with the various tribes on both sides of the Line to confront the Pakistani aggression along the line” (Pashtun Times, 2017). The policy of fencing the boundary line by the state of Pakistan created doubts in the minds of the Afghan people and it was said that Pakistan can’t do anything without the will of the government of Afghanistan and that Mr. Ghani has been taken on board silently. Haji Zahir Qadir (Wolesi Jirga (Parliament) member) declared that Pakistan’s “fencing of the Durand Line was taking place under an agreement signed by the government”. While the President of Afghanistan Dr. Ashraf Ghani on the other hand, disclaimed all types of allegations (Fetri, 2017).

### **Methodology:**

The planned research uses mixed methods for getting research outcomes. For instance, quantitative and qualitative data analysis techniques have used. During data collection, primary and secondary sources have been consulted. Primary data was gathered through questionnaires and personal interviews from ordinary Afghans, government officials and political leaders in Nangarhar Province. The authors selected Nangarhar Province for data collection purpose because Nangarhar is one of the provinces which is located near the Durand line and in border with Pakistan. Thousands of people cross the border on daily basis for different purposes. Also, Mohmandara district of Nangarhar province is selected for primary data collection. It is because, this district borders Pakistan. Village Daka, Hazarnaw and Basawal were the areas within Mohmand Dara were most of data has been collected. Many students from these villages study in Pakistani schools. In order to obtain the

data, the author distributed 45 questionnaires among the aforementioned group. Twenty sample sizes were selected for interviews (see appendix). In this study the authors have used convenience sampling - Snowball Method for interview. The author collected the data in Pashto language as one of the greatest problems is understating English, therefore, the author translated the questionnaire and interview questions from Pashto to English.

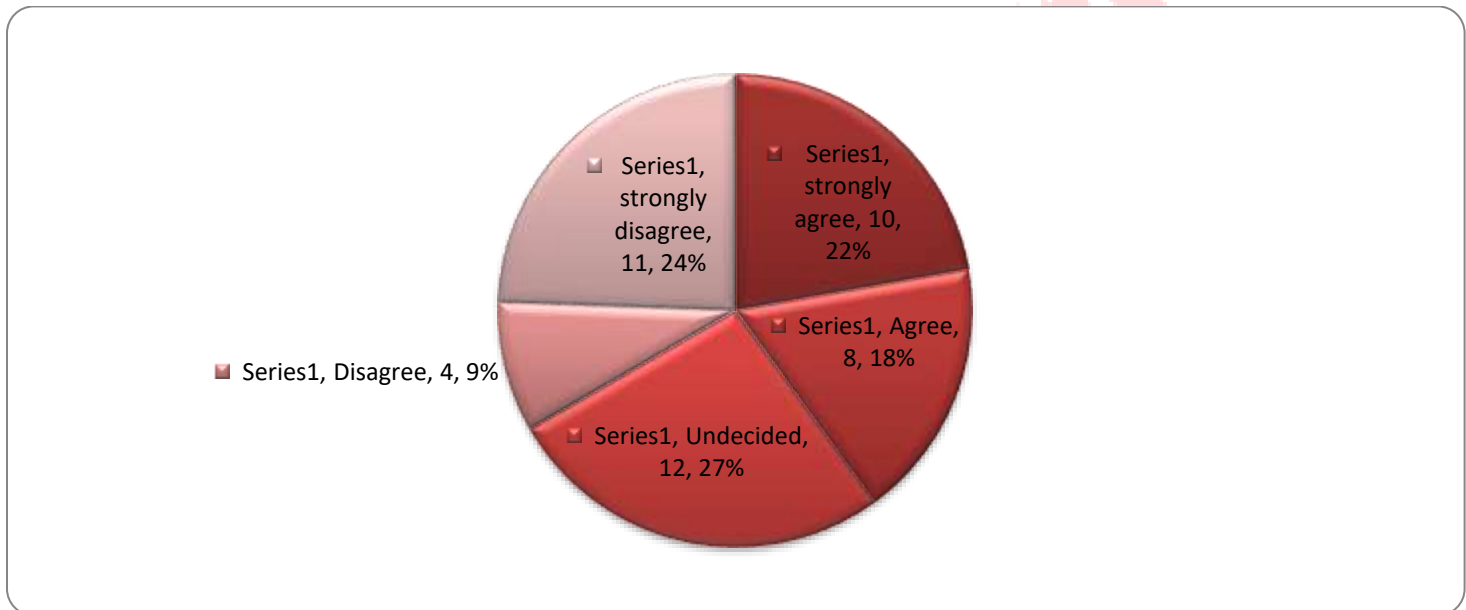
The universe was classified into two groups the general public and politician/government officials. General public had been interviewed for the purpose to understand their problems while crossing the border after the new border management system. Government official and politicians were interviewed to know how the border management policy is impacts the relationship between the two countries. During collection of data, the authors faced a number of problems. In the said district, Islamic State militants are very much active and it was very difficult to collect the data. Therefore, the authors used the convenience sampling - Snowball method to fill the questionnaires from the people who were known to author. Secondary sources of qualitative data comprise: newspapers, journals, books, published sources and internet. A questionnaire has been used for the collection of quantitative data in order to gather the most authentic information from the people living on the Afghan side of the border. Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) 23 version software has used to analysis the data and find the results.

### **The Perception of Afghan Nation on Border Management Policy**

The people of Afghanistan have had many reservations on accepting the Durand line (the border amongst Pakistan and Afghanistan), and they have been claiming that it's our own land. Since long Pakistanis and Afghans would cross the border without passports or visas for so many reasons like family visits, businesses, sport competitions, tourism, and medical purposes. Currently Pakistani visa is free for Afghans; it is usually valid for six months and each stay for one month. In 2012, Pakistan ended the visa extension program; and from January 2017 Pakistan and Afghanistan prevented entrance to their countries without a valid passport and visa. Afterwards, Pakistan has also introduced new border management policy for Afghan nationals. These include valid passport and visa for everyone, who wants to enter and exist Pakistan, fencing the border and construction of forts along the Durand line.

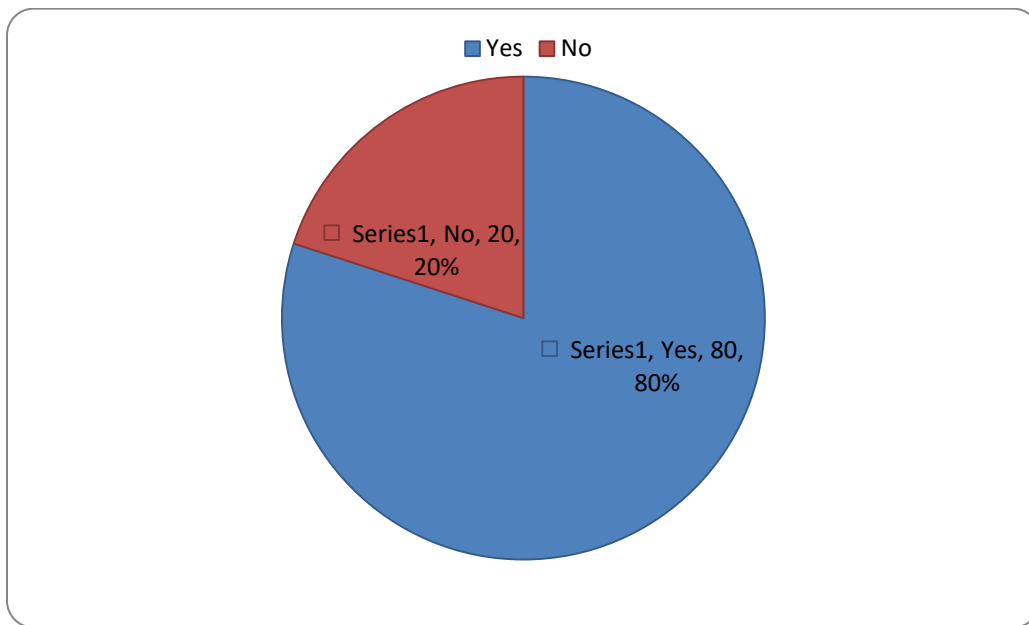
**Descriptive Analysis:**

**Figure No.1 Pakistan’s New Border Management will Adversely Impact Relationship between Afghanistan and Pakistan**



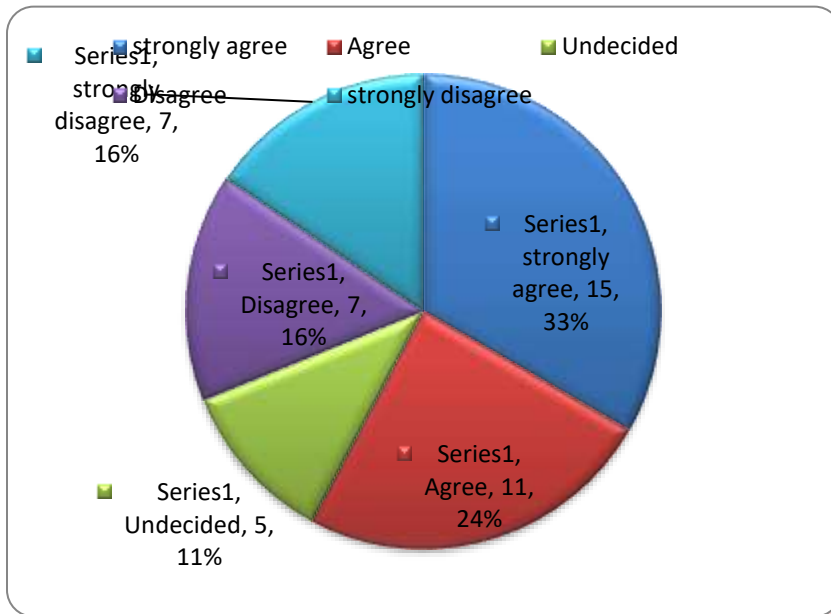
In order to analyze that Pakistan’s new border management will adversely impact relationship between Afghanistan and Pakistan, five measurement scales have been used from strongly agree to strongly disagree shown in Table 5 and chart. According to this data, the total percentage of those who strongly agree and agree that the current border management policy of Pakistan will adversely impact the relationship between the two countries comes around 40 %, where as those strongly disagreeing and disagreeing are around 33 %, which is lower. Therefore, we can safely say that a majority of Afghan respondents along the Durand line border see these border management policies in a negative light and consider it to be adversely impacting the relationship between the two countries.

**Figure 2. Since Pakistan Issued Visa Policy in Border, would it Create Problems for the People?**



In order to analyze that since Pakistan issued visa policy in border, would it create problems for the people, two measurement scales: yes or no have been employed as indicated in in Table 6 and given chart. The findings revealed that the total percentage of those who said “yes” that the new visa policy will create problems for the people comes 80%, where as those who said “no” are 20% which is lower. Therefore, it can be documented that majority of the Afghan respondents along the Durand line border see these visa issue policy in a negative light and consider it will create problems.

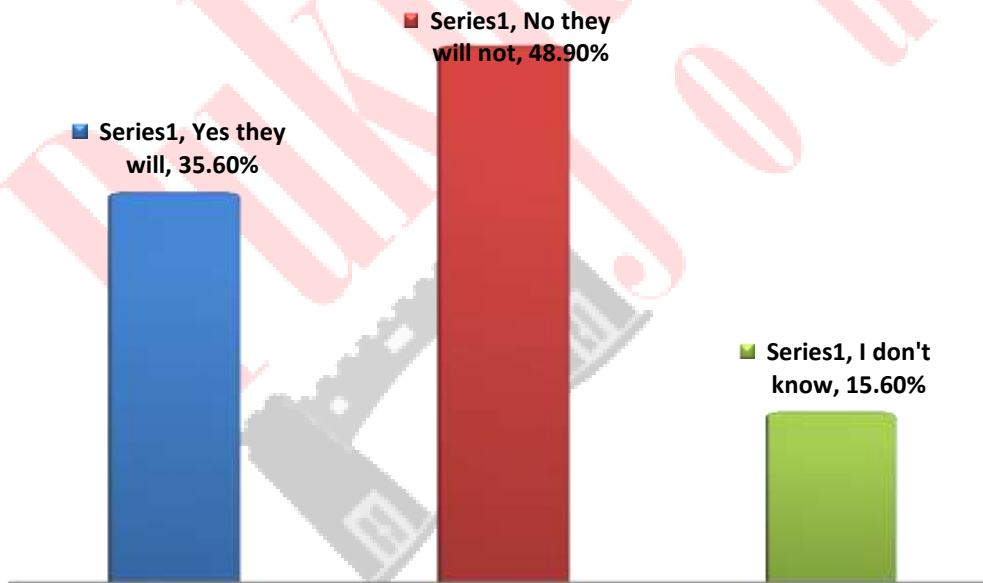
**Table3. The New Visa Policy and Requirement by Government of Pakistan is Creating Many Problems for Afghan Nationals**



In order to analyze that the new visa policy and requirement by government of Pakistan is creating many problems for Afghan nationals, five measurement scales have been used from strongly agree to strongly disagree shown in Table 7 and given chart. According to results, the total percentage of those who strongly agree and agree that the new visa policy and requirement by government of Pakistan is creating many problems for Afghan nationals comes around 58%, where as those strongly disagree and disagree are around 31 %, which

is lower. Therefore, we can safely say that a majority of Afghan respondents along the Durand line border see these that new visa policy and requirements is creating problems for Afghan nationals.

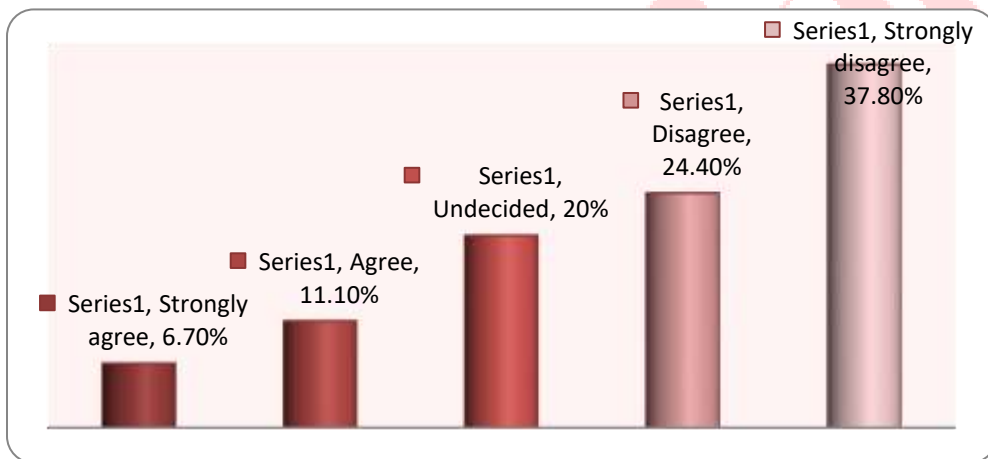
**Figure 4: There are Some Families which are Living in Both Countries will they Accept the New Border Management Rules**





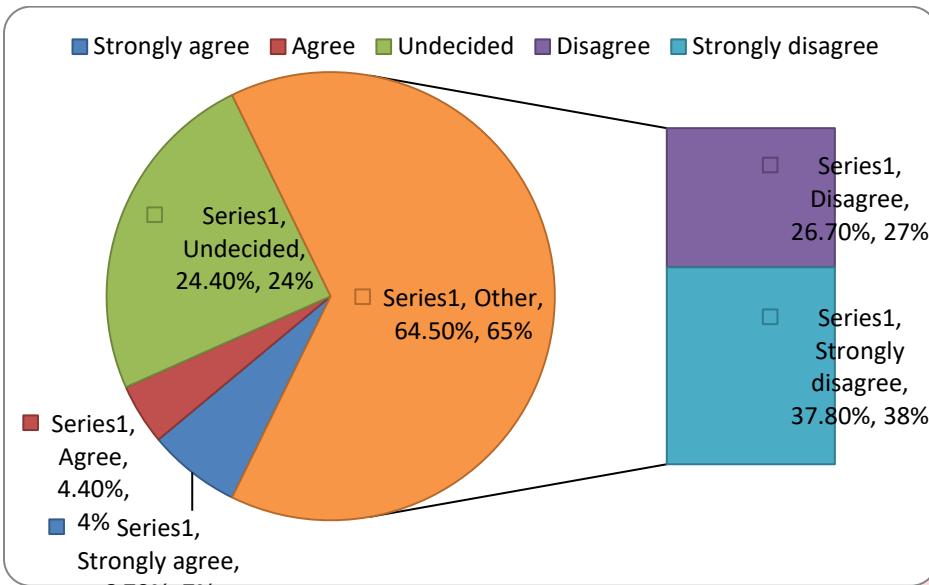
In order to analyze that there are some families which are living in both countries will they accept the new border management rules, three measurement scales have been used: “Yes they will”, “No they will not” and “I don’t know” are shown in Table 8 and given chart. According to results, the total percentage of those who responded “no they will not accept the new border management policy” are around 49% , however those accept are around 36%, which is lower. Therefore, we can safely say that majority of Afghan respondents along the Durand line border see these that families who are living in both countries will not accept the new border management rules.

**Figure 5: Fencing the border will reduce terrorist movement across the border?**

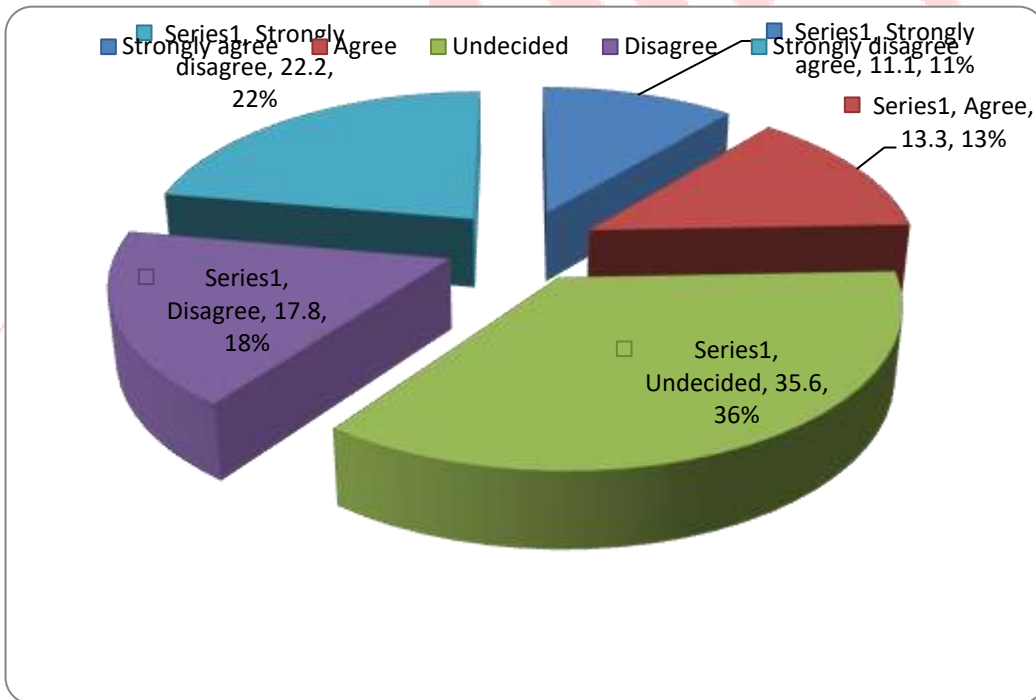


In order to analyze that the Fencing the border will reduce terrorist movement across the border, five measurement scales have been used from strongly agree to strongly disagree shown in Table 9 and given chart. According to results, the total percentage of those who “strongly agree” and “agree” that the fencing the border will reduce terrorist movement across the border comes around 18%, where as those “strongly disagree” and “disagree” are around 62%, which is higher. Therefore, we can safely say that a majority of Afghan respondents along the Durand line border see these that fencing the border will not play a role in order to minimize the terrorist movements across the border.

**Figure 6: The Afghan government should accept Pakistan's new border management policy?**



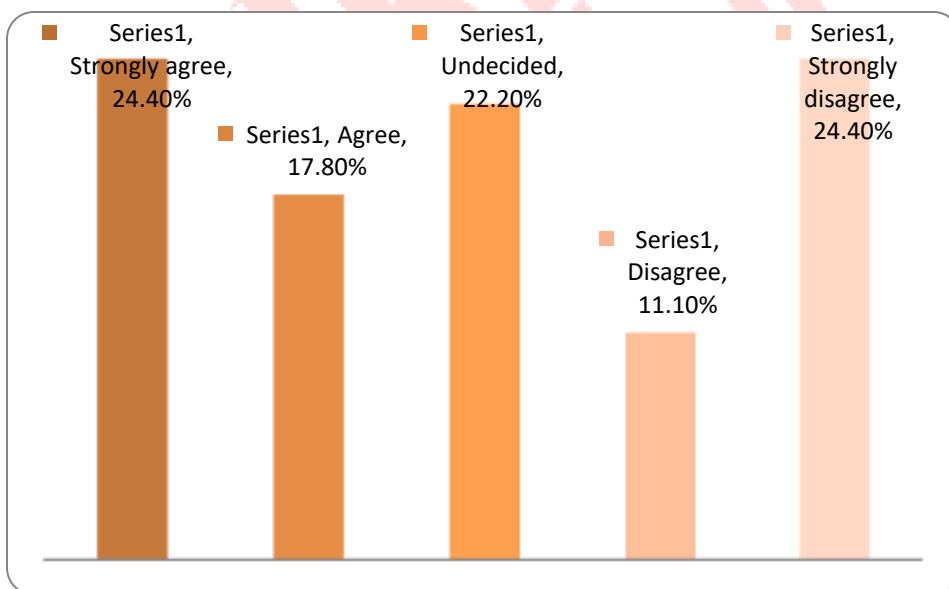
**Figure 7: Acceptance of Border Management Policy**



In order to analyze that the Afghan government should accept Pakistan's new border management policy, five measurement scales have been used from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree” shown in Table 10 and given chart. According to results, the total percentage of those who “strongly agree” and “agree” that the Afghan government should accept Pakistan's new border management policy comes around 11%, where as those strongly disagreeing and disagreeing are around 65%, which is higher. Therefore, we can safely say that a majority of Afghan respondents along the Durand line border see Afghan government should not accept Pakistan's new border management policy. Figure 7 Fencing of the border will negatively impact economy of the Afghan people

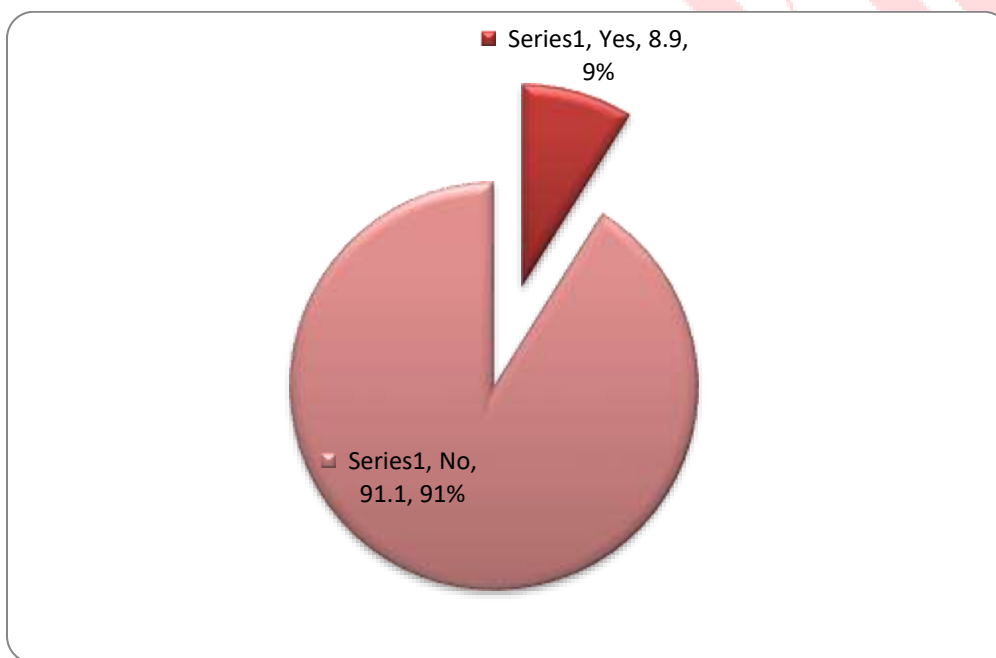
In order to analyze that the fencing of the border will negatively impact economy of the Afghan people, five measurement scales have been used from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree” shown in Table 11 and given chart. According to results, fencing of the border will negatively impact economy of the Afghan people comes around 24%, where as those strongly disagreeing and disagreeing are around 40%, which is higher. Therefore, we can safely say that a majority of Afghan respondents along the Durand line border see that new border management policy will not negatively affect the economy of Afghan.

**Figure 8: Fencing will the border will reduce trafficking of illegal goods**



In order to analyze that fencing will the border will reduce trafficking of illegal goods, five measurement scales have been used from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree” shown in Table 12 and given chart. According to results, fencing will the border will reduce trafficking of illegal goods comes around 42%, where as those strongly disagreeing and disagreeing are around 48%, which is higher. Therefore, we can safely say that a majority of Afghan respondents along the Durand line border see that fencing will not help to mitigate trafficking of illegal goods.

**Figure 9: Do you want border to be fenced by the government of Pakistan?**



In order to analyze that “do you want border to be fenced by the government of Pakistan”, two measurement scales: “yes” or “no” have been employed as indicated in in Table 13 and given chart. The findings revealed that the total percentage of those who said “yes” that the government of Pakistan should fence the border comes around 9%, where as those who said “no” are around 91% which is higher. Therefore, it can be documented that majority of the Afghan respondents along the Durand line border expressed that the border should be opened and the government of Pakistan must not fence the Pak-Afghan Torkham border.

### Interview Analysis:

The in depth twenty interviews were conducted from general public (10) and politicians (5) and government officials (5) to find the different view point. The concise reports are given in the subsequent paragraphs.

According to general public, fencing on Pak Afghan border will increase more tension between the two countries as Afghanistan has never accepted it as an international border. However, the government officials and politicians also commented that “The fencing of Durand Line would, without any doubt, create more problems for already strain relations between the two countries as Afghanistan has not recognized Durand line as an official boundary between the two countries” Not only Afghan government opposes such a move, but the Pashtuns of both sides are stern averse to the fencing of Durand line and favors free movement between Afghanistan and Pakistan. Recently, when Kartharpor border opened between India and Pakistan, Pashtun leaders including Maulana Fazul Rehman, called for opening of all crossing points with Afghanistan as well. Pakistan’s Prime Minister, Imran Khan, in his speech on 26 July 2018, also talked of open borders with Afghanistan on the pattern of European Union. The Fencing of Afghan border, apart from political tensions between the two countries, would also lead to skirmishes along Durand Line between the two countries. Keeping in view the responses of general public and politicians and government officials, it is better to soften the border policy imposed by the government of Pakistan in order to improve political, economic and social relationship between Pakistan and Afghanistan.

But the government of Pakistan took this initiative to impose the border management policy as the government and its general public do not accept the Durned line as an international border between two countries. Similarly, through fencing Pakistan wants to show it as an international border. Pakistan also wants to show worldwide that Pakistan is neither the victim of terrorism nor supporter of the terrorism. Therefore, Pakistan spending lot of money on fencing to save country. However, they also of the view that “The project aims to curtail the flow of terrorists between the two countries (Fetri&Khwaga, 2017).

However the previous government and current governments of Afghanistan has been refused, condemned and shared their concerns against fencing. The government officials and politicians are of the view that “the Afghan government calls this as unilateral. Durand Line is not the international border and fencing is not legal.

The Afghan government has formally opposed it and there have been series of clashes on the border lines as well” (A. Miankhel, personal communication, 2018).

Furthermore, the general public reported that “restriction of visa to Pakistan has arisen vehement abhorrence in the Afghan public and so does in government. So looking to these circumstances it might impact relationship between these two countries” (M. Bakhtiar, personal communication, 2018). The politicians are of the view that

The Visa Restrictions on Afghan nationals from the Pakistan have been impacting the relationship between Afghan-Pakistan negatively. Now most of the Afghans are thinking that the Pakistan is not a second home for them anymore, but it is a hostile country and the Pakistan is enjoying when the Afghan nationals are in trouble. (S. Sadat and S. Kakar, personal communication, 2018)

The government officials reported that “the new border management policy has affected the economy of Pakistan greater than Afghanistan economy. It reduced the trade between the two countries and Afghanistan changes their trade routes” (M. Amin, personal communication, 2018).

Now Afghanistan current government has established and open many transit ways to other countries, for example, Afghanistan has signed agreement of railways track with China, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Iran. Afghanistan uses the Chabahar harbor. Afghanistan also has many airways with many other countries, as well. (F. Hotak, personal communication, 2018)

Further they added,

Visa restriction and border management multiples problems for countries engage in trade. In this case, the problems have increased not only for Afghanistan but for Pakistan, too.”Or same action to close border on Afghanistan or bring pressure on trading or make rules on that. So, of course, many negative impacts will happen on both countries trading as well on political or diplomatic issue too. (S.Sayedi, personal communication, 2018)

The general public and politicians responded that “the government of Afghanistan has never accepted the Durand line as international border. Fencing the border will create problems and badly affect the relationships

between two Muslim countries” (K.Hamdard, personal communication, 2018). The opinion of different respondents are coded their so as to draw the clear sketch of viewpoints. “Yes of course, fencing this dispute border will create many problems. Likewise adverse impact on international relations between these two countries” (H. Manzanai, personal communication, 2018).

Yeah, we know it by all means that Durand Line is not acceptable for Afghans and Afghan government as an international border at all. Undoubtedly, Fencing will surely create many problems in this regard. Neighboring relations will be torn down, hatred will be increased and it will have many comprehensive challenges in all fields of life. (N. Momand, personal communication, 2018)

Fencing border by Pakistan is illegal and contrary to the international norms and laws. That is the reason that Afghan forces have destroyed the fence and fought Pakistani troops on the border. The mentioned situation will have bad impact on Political, Cultural, Traditional and Trade of both countries. (H. Ekhtyar, personal communication, 2018)

The government officials and general public reported that

The strict control of border between two countries reduces trade and import/export. Ten years ago, both countries had almost 2 million dollar trade and goods import/export but now, due to strict control of border, trade decreased to more or less one milliards dollar. If a country wants to have good greater extent trade with other countries, then it has to established soft and easy going policies for border control. (I. Ahmedzai, personal communication, 2018)

Pakistan is trying to exceed the Tax on the goods imported from Afghanistan. “It has created a lot of problems for merchants and their goods are awaited for long time at the border. This causes the goods get rotten and also not getting sell on the needed price due to the high tax and hurdle in cross points” (A. Muradi, personal communication, 2018). One of the respondent commented that “

In recent past, we have witnessed a huge reduction in trade sector between the countries. Afghanistan has searched and found alternative routes for its import-export. Therefore, fencing the wall will not have a

major impact on economic ties but still it will hit those traders who are still importing from Pakistan. (N. Haleem, personal communication, 2018)

According to the general public and government officials, “the border management policy of Pakistani government will never reduce terrorism across the border. Merely border closure and sealing is not enough to combat terrorism. Rather both sides must not end the safe heavens of terrorists” (A. Muhammad, personal communication, 2018).

The best way to eliminate the scourge of terrorism, which is the common enemy of both nations, Pakistani establishment should review its policy regarding Afghanistan. Therefore, there needs to be more focus on sincere and practical cooperation with Afghanistan and international community instead of fencing the Durand line which is only dividing the people of both countries. (H. Assad, personal communication, 2018)

The government officials commented,

Although this might somehow face the terrorists into trouble as they might be commuting easily before and may face some problems now because of the fences being in place, but this is not a genuine decision to stop terrorism. Pakistan instead of investing a lot on the fencing could easily destroy the safe havens of the terrorists which are located in the Pakistan which they know their addresses as well. This way Pakistan would not only reduce the terrorism but also eliminate and destroy their cells and roots from the region. (N, Alokzai, personal communication, 2018)

The general public reported that there are more families living in both sides of the border the members of these families are working different occupations at port across the Durand line to get their livelihood. As stated above, sealing border have more adverse impacts and any positive ones. It affects trade, diplomatic and people to people relations.

## Conclusions

This article concludes that the government of Afghanistan and Afghan nation has strong reservation over the border management policy of Pakistan. The outcome revealed that it would negatively impact the relationship



between both countries. The new visa policy is creating many problems and most people have rejected the border management policy. The results indicated that this policy formulated by government of Pakistan, cannot reduce the terrorist movement across the border. The Afghan nation demanded not to fence the border, as well as, ask the government not to accept the current management policy with Pakistan.

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