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Outcasts – in search of identity

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Master of Science in Journalism

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OUTCASTS – IN SEARCH OF IDENTITY

This Dissertation/Thesis/Survey report is submitted to the Faculty of Journalism as partial fulfillment Masters of Science in Journalism degree

By

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Spring Semester 2019
Institute of Business Administration (IBA), Karachi, Pakistan

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Dedication

To all the citizens who have been struggling for their rightful claim to Pakistani citizenship according to the Constitution of Pakistan.

Acknowledgement

The contributions of all the experts and characters who agreed to be interviewed for this documentary have been immense. Many thanks for the time that they gave to this production.

A great thank you to my friends and colleagues who helped me during the course of this production. A special thanks to Faizan Suleman, for his contribution towards the post production of this documentary. I would also like to thank Zulfiqar Ali Qureshi for his contribution towards the research and going out of his way to find numerous examples of decisions made by the judiciary of Pakistan in the light of citizenship laws.

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Abstract

Outcasts – In search of identity is a 22-minute investigative documentary about the Pakistani citizens who aren't documented citizens according to NADRA – National Database and Registration Authority. The documentary explores the issue of undocumented citizens through one character as an example and talks to different experts and journalists who have been reporting on the issue over the recent years.

Synopsis

The idea for this documentary came from a story published in the Express Tribune which talked about the people who are unable to vote in 2018 elections due to not having Computerized National Identity Cards (CNICs) in the Ibrahim Hyderi locality in Karachi.

Not having a CNIC in Pakistan means that you are not able to participate in civic life and also not subscribe to basic facilities like housing, water, gas and employment.

This documentary film looks at different cases and through the experience of some journalists what it is like to live as an undocumented citizen. The film also explores the reasons why some segments of society are not able to get documented either due to illiteracy, lack of awareness or out of taking advantage staying undocumented. The film also looks at the constitution of Pakistan and who is a citizen of Pakistan according to it. The film acknowledges the challenges faced by organizations like NADRA. Examples of cases of citizenship being granted to non-Pakistani's are also discussed.

The research included talking to different lawyers, legislators, journalists and undocumented citizens to understand the issue and its seriousness. The issue has mostly been understood as a minority or immigrant issue but the film set out to challenge that perception and talk about the wider problem faced by many indigenous Pakistanis whose families have been living as undocumented citizens for generations.