

Partition: The Changing Connotation of Shelter

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The British period ended with a dark episode of Indian history, that was the Partition, the territorial separation gave birth to two new nations, and that Partition brought national division along with tears and miseries of the people. Partition not only displaced people but also created factors of re-settlement, and re-establishment and opened new pages of identity crisis and cultural discourses. Many new vistas of discussion are reconstructed in the Indian socio-political scenario. The post-partition period was more horrific. Searching for shelter in an unknown destination was not a lone muddle but psychology, and identity all were the issues of concern for post-partition beginning life for the refugee people. This paper aims to focus on all these aspects of post-partition conditions facing the refugee people.

Keywords: Partition, Shelter, Refugee, Displacement

‘Partition’ brought a large change in the socio-economic landscape of India. The Post-colonial studies of socio, political, and economy in India are unfinished without touching the Partition. The fragmentation of national territory produced a dark phase of Indian politics. The partition decision not only hampered the regional economy but produced numberless de-citizen people named as refugees. The controversy over De-citizen as a refugee can be definitely a debatable issue.

The saga of displacement is multi-layered. The process of de-sheltering which began in 1947, seems an unending factor, in the last few years social, political, and economic refugees and shelter less have increased. In different passages of time, these partitioned victims were uprooted even after the post partitioned period in different political occasions. The phases of after-partition displacement also carried the same feeling of uncertainty, psychological disturbances, identity crisis, and national economic disaster. The stages of the new settlement did not bring any topographical change but reshaped the demographic structure. It is depressing that the people who were the direct victims of partition also faced several displacements in the post-independent period.

Ram Chandra Guha in his book “India After Gandhi” mentioned “Independence had also meant Partition. The last twelve months had seen almost continuous rioting between Hindus and Muslims. The violence had begun on 16 August 1946 in Calcutta and spread to the Bengal countryside. From there it moved on to Bihar, then on to the United Provinces, and finally to the province of Punjab, where the scale of the violence and the extent of the killing exceeded even the horrors that had preceded it. The violence of August-September 1946 was, in the first instance, instigated by Muslim League, the party which fuelled the movement of a separate state of Pakistan”(Guha, 2017, p.8-9). The continuous violence forced people to dislocate from their place; violence was used as a weapon to displace a particular community from their

territory because the treaty of partition was based on the creation of a separate state based on communal ideology. Therefore the people of other regions are not allowed to stay there, resulting in the mass exodus. The question was where to go and take shelter and how the newly welfare government formed would treat the newcomer. Digging into the shelter ended with a bitter experience and new discourses unfolded.

None of a single part of socio-political and economic affairs in post-colonial India could be scrutinized without understanding and examining the Partition. The separation had given mammoth tribulation of the two parts of the country Bengal and Punjab and had produced Asia's largest number of refugees. The term refugee combines the notion of displaced, dispossessed, and productive in the same analytical field.

The present work is trying to answer two questions:

- Why does shelter need redefining for partition refugee people?
- How re-sheltering did disturb the life of the refugee people?

Historical Context

"The Census of 1951 reported the entry of at least 3.5 million refugees in West Bengal. During the period of April to September nearly 25,000 people took shelter in different government-sponsored camps every month. The influx increased further during the period of 1955 to 1960 for excessive communal violence." (Chakrabarty, 1971, p.2). Again a large number of people were displaced from their native places. This uprooting became a regular process. Another chunk of the influx was noticed in 1971, the Bangladesh Liberation War. The incidents of displacement in independent India in many cases are still rooted in the socio-political problem of partition.

People exchanging during partition were not peaceful affairs. When Memories of brutality cheating them, a new settlement could not be given a pleasant sense and security. Partition splitting two sides of the country, Punjab and West Bengal. The refugee influx began from both the regions. Post partition period forced displacement was silent in Punjab region but in West Bengal it became an unending process.

The riot, horror of riots, and killing made people uproot and displaced and awarded the status of 'marginalized'. After the outbreak of the Noyakhali riot, it was obvious that havoc and violence were awaiting (Mahajan, 1987, p.572). The anticipation was that the killing and vandalization had transgressed. Then what forces stopped the authorities from taking any action against the unlawful activities? These illicit activities were not confined to the territory of the newly proposed Pakistan but also spread to the Indian side and the minorities irrespective of religion were losing their life and property. The riot places were visited by the renowned political leaders, poets, and philosophers but they failed to protect the miseries. And not a single step had been taken against lawbreakers. It was true that identifying the culprit from the mob was difficult but locals revealed the identities of the attackers and even after that no appropriate protection had been ensured. Many riots took place after strong threats to leave their house and belongings, therefore criminals were confident about their future actions when no restraint came. That created a mess for the refugee people. It would be wrong to state that no time was available for the political leaders to prepare some immediate alternative arrangements for the riot-affected people. There was sufficient time available for the peaceful shifting of the people. Unfortunately, it did not happen. Intellectual interpretation of refugee migration is

important because this could probably focus on the emergence of new political thought after the partition in Bengal.

Partition, following the riots and brutality, was not all about politics. Social structure, class division, and caste and religious chauvinism played the dominant role in this context. Therefore partition needs to be understood from the light of Muslim separatist movements also. Historians identified the role of an elite section in Bengal segregated Muslims communally (Chatterjee, J., 2002). The lower caste Bengalis like Matuas and other Namosudra castes were getting separate treatment socially and economically. Since the thirties of the 19th-century historians have found evidence of caste hierarchy in Bengal society (Bandyopadhyay, S., 2004) . Even the Bhadrolok (educated, economically independent, respectful section of people in Bengal) class also supported the social division in the 19's. Mughol's oppression of politics and Brahminical dominance in Bengal threatened the identity of the lower caste people. Conversion to Islam from the lower castes was a common incident until the Bhakti movement originated and the genesis of Vaishnava. Vaishnava and Shakta cults had created some critical sect structures within the caste groups in Bengal. Therefore the communal sentiments were the saga of upper caste-lower caste differences, where religion was not so difficult, commune meant lower community, and " Cultural Superiority" of the Bhodrolok was active. History has evidence that the role of Hindu Kings and Muslim rulers who were the foreign inventor, rule undemocratic manner, and oppressor administrators who came to India to plunder, their agencies were busy exploiting the Hindu community and women were not secure from raped and the forceful conversions (Roy, 1987,p.39). During the Hindu Mahasabha meetings in Calcutta which was predominantly funded by the richest Marwaries like Jugal Kishore Birla, which was preparing communal campaigning, and after that few riots took place in Dacca. Bengali Hindu Bhadrolok didn't hesitate to join the Mahasebha in the early 1940s. It is also noticed that the Bengal Congress opened a relief fund to finance the Hindu refugees from Dacca who shifted to Tripura during the riot period (Chakraborty. P., 1990). Secular sentiment was not much stronger.

So it is not partition but cultural heterogeneity among the Hindu society divided the people and communalism completed the process. This division continued even after the independence of Bengal. The refugees and their shelters spoke the truth. Lose of property and pride made high-class Hindus more rejectionists. Settlement in a new country contemplated the picture. The divided Hindus between class and caste created another feature of Bengali Bhodrolok in Kolkata and sub-urban (Ghosh, 1998, p.33). Saratchandra Chattopadhyay mentioned that class-conscious Hindu Bhadrolok rarely accepted the Hindu Chotolok, the lower caste, and lower class peasants, workers (chasa, bhusa kooli, major) Jaya Chatterjee pointed out in her book, "Bengal divided". The growing population of refugee people and the attitude of the intellectual section of Bengal were neutral. Multiple studies indicate that the affluent, culturally respectful community of West Bengal had shown no cheerful expression towards the refugee influx. That situation supports the growth of another binary, based on culture. Differences had grown between the locals and outsiders popularly known as Ghoti-Bangal. This Ghoti-Bangal discourse has an immense impact on Bengali society, sports, and even politics.

Partition had many hidden aspects. These invisible scenes have different narratives. The Partitioned narratives have included psychological disorders, identity

crises, cultural shock, gender differences, etc. in micro analysis. All these narratives have a common root, that is the change of location and memory of nesting was horrific and troublesome for maximal partition refugee population. Incidents of deterritorialization disturbed the core aspects of livelihood and private space.

Partition and the series of displacements not solely uprooted people from their native places but affected mental behavior, uprooting created a huge impact on the rest of life in West Bengal (Research Report). Adaptation, cultural clashes, and more importantly humiliation because of their status as Udbastu or refugees or treatment of outsiders amplify psychological disturbances.

The idea of shelter as understood generally :

Darida defined Shelter as not merely a mental satisfaction or a matter of security. Home and homeland are the subjects of psychology that influence the social and cultural development of individuals and the nation. Shelter influences the individual entity. Displacement attached individuality and questioned the identity. Derrida's thoughts in this regard expressed the impact of displaced people. Culture, language , and society are the byproducts of human influence.

Displacement destroyed the peace and forced people to move and build new settlements. During this movement culture, language, and tradition also traveled to the new place, mixed with the existing one, and developed new features of the society (Gibsan. S., 2013).

"The Right to adequate housing is a Human right" (UNO). Human Rights Declaration 1948 declared that Human Rights development requires proper housing facilities for quality of life and minimum living conditions. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights states, under Article 25.1, that:"Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well being of himself and his family, including food, clothing, housing, medical care and necessary social service and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood circumstances beyond his control."

The definition of the Charter of Human Rights Declaration states that "the right of every woman, man, children, and youth to gain and sustain a safe home and community in which to live in peace and dignity."

In the case of U.P. Avas Ebam Vikas Parishad v. Friends Coop. Housing Society Ltd. 1996 the Supreme Court of India stated that " The Right to Shelter is a Fundamental Right, which sprigs from the Right to Residence under Article 19 (1) (e) and The Right to Life under Article 21."Residence under Article 19 (1) (e) and the Right to Life under Article 21."

None of these were followed by the newly formed government.

Partition and the changing definition of Shelter:

Anusua Basu Raychadhury wrote in her paper " Nostalgia of 'Desh', Memories of Partition" that " The communal frenzy not only killed thousands of people, it also uprooted and displaced millions from their traditional homeland, their 'Desh'. This displacement forced many to search for a new home away from home. Partition and their home became hostile and they started imagining that peace and security were on the other side of the border,"(Raychadhury, 2004,p. 5653).

Shelter is not all about shed houses, shelter is the psychological comfort of any human being. Shelter includes sharing, love, a zone of peace, and a feeling of togetherness and negation of binary. Displacement is compared with withdrawal from shelter but resettlement is not compared with home unless a secure life and psychological or mental coziness are ensured. In this way, the shelter that was given by the Indian government to the refugees and the place that they acquired later cannot be called 'home'. Partitioned changed the meaning of HOME. The present definitions of Shelter were a nightmare for them what they experienced since the partition.

Destruction and resettlement (practical cases):

Pravabati Devi was a resident of Narayanganj district of Bangladesh and married Sri Ramesh Chandra Chawdhory in Dacca (name changed). She was happy in her in-law's house, after giving birth to two children when it was completely established that India would be split. They started to arrange their belongings. As a business-class family, it was not very difficult for them to shift because they had already connected with Kolkata, Benaras, and Mumbai. However, as a Bengali family, they preferred to choose Bengal as their next destination. This family took shelter in a refugee camp. The camp conditions were so horrific that they were planning to commit suicide. A few months later they with the help of their relatives shifted to North Bengal.

Mahesh Kumar Ghosh was a resident of the Narsingdi region of East Pakistan. The head of the family was a doctor. His sons were all students during the time of the declaration of partition, one of his sons was a student at Dacca Medical College. Partition spoiled the peace and happiness of his family. Partition brought them in an uncertain future. The family lost their prosperity, they were in dilemma until the last minute of their decision about the departure from their soil. And they decided to settle in Nadia. The first experience was negative and hurtful for them. Every day they suffered to prove themselves that they would not create any harm rather they needed support from the locals. The next few more families arrived from the same place in East Pakistan which gave them support to adjust to a new place. The parent's career expectations from their children were unfulfilled. Rearrangement in the new nation was started with acute poverty. The unavailability of documents for medical practice was also difficult for him. It took time to establish.

Monindra Nath Roy was a resident of Chattagram, and was from a business class family. Rioting killed his many relatives. Vandalism spoiled property and money and other valuables were looted from their residents. When the incident was taking place, many Hindu families were also attacked in the same locality. They threatened that more heinous actions would happen if they did not leave the place soon. Lane after lane was torched by fire. People were helplessly screaming for help. These incidents bound them to leave the region and they chose Assam as their next destination because of the geographical proximity. On 6th July 1947 Sylhet decided to part Sylhet from Assam and merge with East Pakistan,

Gour Charan Mitra after partition came to India and settled in the Duars region of West Bengal. In Pre pre-independent times his family was a resident of Faridpur, East Pakistan. They were a farming family. They had their agricultural land in Faridpur. They were well established in undivided Bengal. The problem came into being after

the declaration of Pakistan, a new nation created based on religion. This family didn't face any direct violence from any other religion but their near and dear ones in other localities were the direct victims of the partition riots. That led them to fear and they decided to shift from their land because of land availability they preferred the Duars region instead of Calcutta.

(An oral interview was conducted with refugee families. During the meeting, they and their family members explained their experience in the post-partition period.)

The above stories are the anecdotes of uncountable refugees in the 1947 Partition. These people were trapped in the consequences of political decisions. Searching for shelter and initial treatment of refugee people in India was a great trauma for them. It utterly mismatched the expectations, hopes, and reality of the partition people after entering the newly independent nation, India. Hope for citizenship had ended with the tag of socially low status and politically foreigners or aliens.

In the post-partition period, many studies were done on partition refugees on their scattered and abandoned lives. Other research works were done on the demographic changes of the capital city Calcutta, the scar of Calcutta, and overall demographic changes that took place after partition in India. The first stage of shelterhood began in the refugee camps. Camps were built merely to give a shade of protection from heat and rain. No respectful treatment was received, not any type of proper protection was ensured.

The refugee camps and their environment had created huge mental burdens on their minds. The government refugee camps were the hostel of mismanagement. In Salbani, Midnapur camp refugees started hunger strikes in protest of the mismanagement in a refugee camp. The people who enjoyed a sophisticated life and dreamed of the same treatment in the new land were their aspirations, destroyed by the camp life. The scarcity of food, water, cloth, and health facilities made them uncitizen, a democratic land failed to ensure the welfare of the people. The origin of different colonies in Kolkata and its surroundings was the self-initiative for a better life or a try to preserve the identity and culture of the past life spent in undivided Bengal. The mental trauma of insult and loss of self-respect created criticality in adjustment to a new city (Ghosh, 2015,p.42). Discomfort placements and ill-treatment in government camps aided in the origin of many legal and socio-political questions later in Bengal.

Refugee Life in a Democratic Nation

The preliminary shelter arrangement for partition refugees was Government camps (Ghosal, 2023, p. 183). Many uprooted families finished their horrifying journey from East Bengal at Sealdah Station in Calcutta and this railway station became their shelter for another several months. Torture was continuing during their journey from their home to their new destination, looting, killing and humiliation by the goons were the common examples. Many of the residents of East Pakistan were safe in their villages but some rumors and feelings of insecurity in the newly declared nation particularly for the communal causes of the origin of a state let them drive to Bengal and they faced the massacre during their journey from their ancestral home to the new destination. Bengal was the most resourceful region of the nation during British India. Partition destroyed the backbone of Bengal as well as the national economy. Therefore people faced tremendous economic setbacks.

Historian Sugata Basu mentioned in his writing that Mahatma Gandhi visited Kolkata and in a meeting with Sarat Bose (brother of Netaji Subhas Bose) discussed the ways to stop the British plan of separating Bengal. But separation took place. The immediate effect of Partition was the refugee influx and suffering for rehabilitation. The Central and State governments were extemporaneous for this huge refugee pressure. Refugees after 1950 were not constant, their demands to other requirements were identical and equal, it happened because people who were leaving East Pakistan after partition were maximum from marginalized sections, and groups who entered before the declaration of partition were economically stable. And that was recognized through their settlement. The financially backward preferred to stay in slums and railway stations.

Kolkata, the capital of Bengal was occupied by the refugees in different periods during partition and after partition, it is better to say from 1946 to 1971. The present Kolkata and its many localities are supposed to be designed differently in case the displaced Bengalis don't reach and build their shelters. Refugees during their stay in refugee centers or other locations kept searching for their permanent shelters, targeting abandoned lands and overnight constructing their huts. The absence of proper government vigilance created the opportunity utmost. Colony committees were in charge of monitoring the locality. In Kolkata, there are several localities existing that are built by the refugees and that is the reason that no legal land document papers are provided to them. The common features of these colonies are schools, temples and libraries set up by the locals. To maintain their identity and their emotions noticed by the name they were given to their shops. The Partition incidents have two crucial parts one is asylum seekers and migration and another is infiltration or illegal encroachment. After the formal official declaration of the separation of territory people were seeking shelter and they entered India and a good number of Indians transferred to newly born Pakistan. Post-partition period became popular for migration from both sides of the country. Justice, just humanitarian treatment was not only violated but created a new definition of savage treatment. Statelessness is undoubtedly a unique feature of South Asia which has been since then. Later on, this region of the Global South became a source of supplying the workforce globally; the migration rate is high in this part of the world.

The tragedy of changing shelter became a continuous process in post-partition India. The partition also left some unsettled issues of citizenship and statehood. The lives of people who were living in the Indo-Bangladesh corridor were miserable and have remained unsolved even after a few decades of the independence of the two nations.

The displacement that took place after the declaration of Pakistan and after the formation of Bangladesh had not been finished even after the occurrence of two huge international incidents. During this period the refugee influx continued followed by communal disturbance and economic draining. In the next few decades, the process of human deportation has built several socio-economic factors. 1948 onwards migration of people from Pakistan was not considered refugees in India reason for the shifting was to hunt for better livelihood. But the economy was not the sole ground, exploitations, cruelty, and negligence were the causes and that happened only with minority Hindu people in East Pakistan (Mehar, J., 2015, p.300-317).

The property and people transfer in Punjab was more constructive and less chaotic

unlike the cases of East Pakistan partitioned people. The total refugee population was 1.6 million in 1949. The attitude of the Central government was criticised by many refugee analyzers because of their reluctant role in refugee settlement. Questions arose about the rehabilitation process also. Complaints of discrimination were raised several times regarding the different treatment between the refugees of East Pakistan and West Pakistan. The process of economic reconstruction was not transparent. At least a few reports are carrying evidence that the Central constructed 1.66 lakh residential units for West Pakistani refugees and 27,000 only for the refugees who came from East Pakistan. Another evidence that the Central Government's Ministry of Home Affairs created a special cell "Transfer Bureau" for employment opportunities for the refugees, this bureau confirmed jobs for 2.84 lakh West Pakistan people and only 1.10 lakh for East Pakistan (Zaminder, 2007, p.120-121).

"Anindita Ghoshal argues that the Centre did nothing for the refugees of East Pakistan or deliberately discriminated against the Eastern Wing as compared to Punjab (Khan, 2018, p. 104).

The unemotional role and preferential policies of the government towards the East Pakistan refugees mark questions about the democratic and social welfare nature of the government. The history revealed that the clashes of understanding between the state authority and the refugee sentiment affected the socio-political environment. In the middle of the 1950's the government of India and the government of West Bengal declared that no more refugees would be accepted and no definition of displaced would be recognized. In the words of Prafulla K. Chakrabarti, "widely regarded as an authority on the subject: 'The Government simply forgot them. They were not eligible for any rehabilitation assistance.'" The newly formed Government's attitude concerning the displaced people was casual and that was the reason that no blueprint was prepared for the issue of their resettlement and socio-economic development (File No, 641/86/48, National Documentation Center).

It was accepted several times and acknowledged by all political philosophers in different periods that partition was the result of the application of the cruel theory of "Divide and Rule". Prof Samir K. Das in his writing mentioned that "De-colonization in the subcontinent was associated with the tragedy of Partition." A single stock of pen changed the normal daily life of the people.

The series of displacements in India in the post-independent period are not independent cases, directly or indirectly also connected with 1947. Incidents of political violence in the North East, inter-state migration, displacement struggle for shelter and livelihood, and issues of re-settlement were very much rooted in the reasons for partition. The binary of ethnic-nonethnic, aboriginal-modern, strong and weak, powerful-less powerful, minority, and majority the definitions of all these binaries appeared in new formed after the end of colonial rule and new interpretation set for these terms which brought another chapter of suppression, socio-economic and political challenges. Modified social stratification was also influenced by partition in post-colonial India. The clashes for identity have several times created miseries for the people, it has been seen in the North East and also in Punjab. Any Political and Social Transition

In the case of Punjab, the exchange of population happened one time only. However, for Bengal, the influx continued in different forms for many years after the partition. The Pakistani government wanted to settle the refugee issues in East Bengal

on the same parameters as had been treated in Punjab, especially concerning evacuee property and had desired to extend the evacuee legislation to the whole of Pakistan including East Bengal.

Tricky and Thorny Border issues affect the sheltering

People in enclaves are treated as abandoned. Now worldwide nearly 250 enclaves (Chhitmahal) exist including Europe, the former Soviet Union, and in South Asia. A great number of enclaves breathed in the Indo-Bangladesh border. Enclaves were born after the disintegration of India, two states formed India and Pakistan. After the Bangladesh War in 1971, a new international border was born without any political discussion.

Many families reside in Chhitmahal and struggle for citizenship. The quest for new citizenship and a residential address destroyed many civilians' lives even after the post-partition period, Chhitmahal problem is another of them. The residents of enclaves had free choice to stay or shift to another location; people who were staying in conclaves of Indo-Bangladesh were the most sufferers before. They were denied the status of citizenship and all the facilities of nationality. Questions of human rights were also unanswered (Banerjee, et. al, p.20). A post-partition period shouldn't have faced diplomatic consequences regarding the status of the status-less people. The census of both the countries Bangladesh and India did not include the record of these enclaves and their subjects.

Doubtful administrative responsibilities and lack of planning regarding the cases of citizenship of the refugee people made the situation more difficult, next political parties used these issues as election subjects rather than put their objective towards permanent solutions. The legally unrecognized subjects were sections of these enclaves trapped under the political willingness (Sen, 2018, p.23). After the formation of the two countries, the anxious relation became a feature of the SouthEast region and sufferers were these innocent people living the passages of the international border. A gloomy bilateral relationship created more crises for the enclave living people. Justice, law and order, and welfare were ignored repeatedly by the governments of both countries. The necessity to connect with their mainland wasn't realized which helped to bear new social problems in the surrounding border areas. The status of unknown citizens made them deprived of economic and social benefits. The partition which took place based on religion but shelter problems erased the religious sentiments of the enclave people and ignited the subject of basic needs for living as human beings. The initiatives were initiated in 1953 and settled in 2015 of their citizenship matter. Bilateral relations between the two countries were not the exact reason for the unsettled issue of the displaced people but the lack of understanding of the gravity of the problem. The citizen's status gave progress to anti-social activities in those areas, illegal migration created a criminal-friendly zone. Long economic and social deprivation made the people of this area psychologically weak.

Subaltern narratives: (True incidents collected through oral interview)

The partition refugee discourse is also being understood through the theory of ' Subaltern'. The Subaltern mainly discussed the socially marginalized classes. The

socially marginalized classes are deprived and exploited sections of society. Years after years research revealed that the lower caste, the ethnic sections are the most risky section in this context. Another study under this heading also discovered that the position of women in society can be understood as a backward community. The condition of female victims and the condition of lower caste people during and post-partition period raised many political and social questions. As a member of civil society, what did the female community achieve in the partition period? The dignity, respect, and the right over their body all were departed and the role of government was quite astonishing. Struggling every moment to prove a local and arranged livelihood on the other hand jeopardized their life.

Motilal Mandal reached Nadia district after partition. Partition affected him psychologically. His health deteriorated; he wasn't able to continue his job anymore. His wife was not literate enough for a good job. She started to learn to weave saris. During this struggle period, she was sexually harassed, and socially humiliated. But as a wife and mother of three children, she tolerated all.

Refugee victims can be subcategories based on the intensity of their suffering. The pain of the migrated tribal people of Sylate and Chattogram was undocumented. Their effort for existence was not matched with a refugee who had taken shelter at Sealdaha in West Bengal, but the horror they faced could not be minimized. Their striving for survival was not bothered by the authorities and that was why the loss of their second home with a designation of foreigner and further uprooting is still undocumented.

People who took shelter in Assam were bound to be displaced during the anti-foreigner movement. A large number of families were sheltering in the North Bengal region. The Kamtapur movement again created a threat of further uprooting them. This movement gifted them many sleepless nights. Chayanika Barua during her interview could not control her tears about how she lost her land and property during the Assam riots. She was cooking in her open kitchen when the mob attacked, they kicked the container of boiling rice, spoiled everything, and finally torched her house. She was speechless during the whole incident, she was narrating that as a mother she was still thinking about what her children would feed now, she realized later the question of existence is not merely about food. Not the Chayanika Barua family but many other families who migrated to Bengal after the Assam disturbance faced identical problems during Gorkhaland and Kamtapur problems.

In 1947 and post-47, few families took shelter in Darjeeling Hill areas. Amol Kumar Chowdhury (name changed) among them who came from Jassore of East Pakistan. Started business but badly affected by Ghorkhland movement. That gory movement took many lives and destroyed private and government property. Sukanta Bhattacharya (name changed) also was affected after the Gorkhaland movement. Not these two families but a lot of other families were in an uncertain future withstanding regional political disorder and came down to the plain areas instead of staying there.

Many decades after partition, the incident had been explained as political impulsiveness. But it was not merely a political wound, a social mess too. The long-term impact of partition is holistic and inclusive. Every case of coercion during partition was not purely personal but rather social.

The partition unraveled many social worries. Families migrated from places like

Dhaka, Jasore, Bikarampur, and surrounding regions were majority amongst the upper caste and economically sound people who realized the problem earlier and started processing the transfer, many of them were able to take shelter in India without facing the riot horror. Districts like Dinajpur, Shylet, and Chattogram were the localities of backward section people and people who were majority from lower castes, the population of schedule caste and schedule tribes was higher. Shelter in West Bengal reduced the discrimination. Post partition location of the refugees determined their livelihood status. The Political apathy and ignorance of the refugees also influenced the situation. Settlements in urban areas were most advantageous for the migrated people, especially nearest or within the metro cities, and produced opposite results in rural locations. These populations turned the new pages of the future of Bengal.

The treatment as 'New' was not so well-hearted. The term "New" as an identity was chasing them many years later and in some places till today. Prof. Ram Charan Johar (name change) faculty of Chandigarh University recalled his memory of how his father was sad after their shifting from Lahore to Punjab. He missed his school friends, and they reunited many years later in India with their grievances of partition. Prof. Johar in his discussion explained the awful social treatment that the refugee families received in their respective localities. The humiliation was highest when they were recognized as a family or community of " Bhagori" or Flew. Here not only their religion was worked but the predominant factor was their birthplace. The refugee families were not entitled to invitations on social occasions. Even in cases of arranged marriage, it is preferred to avoid refugee families for their groom or bride. It was difficult to continue my school education for refugee children because bullying was a regular affair. In this huge psychologically unfriendly situation, it was greatly difficult for them to mentally resettle in the newly independent India.

They were sharing memories during the interview which was not pleasant. The destruction, vandalizing, and live threats became regular affairs. In Plains life was full of trouble, no secure financial resources were there for regular income. The education of the children was uncertain. The weather of the region produced more difficulties for them. The social rejection was not faced by them.

Several times criticism was raised that the ruling Congress government in Centre and state both were non sympathetic about the re-settlement issues of refugees. The State government had complained on several occasions about the non supportive behavior of the Central government for discharging financial help (Gupta, 2024,p.159-176).

Conclusion

The displacement during and after partition has many implications political, social as well as economic. The process of migration from opposite sides of Bengal remains and the tale of displacement is also incessant. The issue of displacement and refugee status became a new agenda constructed by the political parties in different phases. Indulging the refugee influx has been a traditional political culture in Bengal since the 70s, the absence of a strong Migration policy in the country works as a boon in this context. The refugee crisis constructed new dimensions of caste politics in Bengal which not only divided the society but also invited the regional socio-economy criticality which demands resolution but is difficult to entirely resolve. Politics never

allowed a permanent solution for the refugee people. The new migratories are used as a vote bank. No constructive policies have been executed for their apolitical human treatment. The urban slums are great examples of the resettled migrated people and the transparent picture of gross violation of human rights. Partition refugees were forced to change their shelters on different occasions according to regional and local political turmoil. The cases of re-sheltering of North Eastern people in the post-partition period are a prominent example. The lower caste and economically weaker refugee section is relocated several times for their socio and economic purposes. The changing global economic scenarios like rapid urbanization, and the downfall of income in small businesses in the post-globalised period are hit strongly by these sections particularly. Many of them after purchasing land and constructing buildings sold their property or lost their property on account of rapid urbanization and economic transformation, and they moved in backward places, another chapter of adjustment had begun. Interrupted life and displacement became a fate for the partitioned displaced population. 'Security' is a term that has no meaning to them. The incidents of political and social unrest in newly independent India made them victims again. A continuation of displacement denied the basic human development of these groups of people. Refugees in Punjab faced new social stratification, where non-refugees kept a social distance and social activities were very limited among them. Handling the displaced refugees and their resettlement should have been the subject of the regional government when India Constitutionally adopted the Federal Structure but treatment of people was not well managed. People who came after 1971 to Bengal from East Pakistan were diplomatically sent to Andaman. Lack of proper refugee management, and the absence of a proper message for new livelihood, brought a rift between the public and institution. That helped to the formation of the Communist Party in West Bengal, later this population became the backbone of the Communist Party.

It was the state's failure to exercise the refugees as the strength of the nation. Burden and responsibilities were their recognition. For a stable and dignified life, Partitioned refugees choose political shelter. Unpredictable political reaction to the refugee sections had failed to bring their respectful life especially the equal social status of the lower caste people. The status division among the refugees influenced an uneven development which is still remarkable even in the post-independent period. The limited economic contribution of the total population in Bengal produced a lower graph of the political economy growth. The displacement, challenges, dissatisfaction and government's apathy for the subject fueled many impulsive national disturbances in the late years of Indian independence. Migration and refugees are in the post-colonial period an issue of concern worldwide. India is not exceptional in this regard, domestic and international migration now need strong legal initiatives to protect human rights.

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