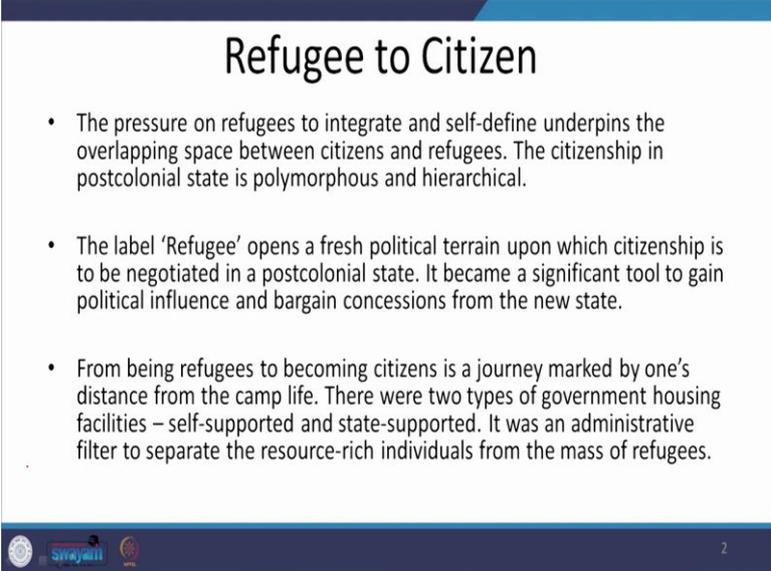


**Partition of India in Print Media and Cinema**  
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**Lecture - 40**  
**Refugee, Desh and Nation - III**

Good morning and welcome back to the lecture series on Partition of India in Print Media and Cinema. We are discussing Refugee, Desh and Nation. So, we have been talking about the process, the differential treatment of the refugees in the postcolonial nation-states in South Asia, and how the experiences were different. We have also discussed the process of a refugee becoming a citizen, and yet remaining the refugee-citizen, the paradoxical existence of the refugee-citizen. (Refer Slide Time: 01:53)



**Refugee to Citizen**

- The pressure on refugees to integrate and self-define underpins the overlapping space between citizens and refugees. The citizenship in postcolonial state is polymorphous and hierarchical.
- The label 'Refugee' opens a fresh political terrain upon which citizenship is to be negotiated in a postcolonial state. It became a significant tool to gain political influence and bargain concessions from the new state.
- From being refugees to becoming citizens is a journey marked by one's distance from the camp life. There were two types of government housing facilities – self-supported and state-supported. It was an administrative filter to separate the resource-rich individuals from the mass of refugees.

Swajal 2

There has always been this pressure on the refugees to integrate and self-define themselves as successfully rehabilitated individuals that have smoothly, you know, entered into the process of becoming citizens. So, the pressure to integrate and self-define underpins this overlapping space between citizens and refugees.

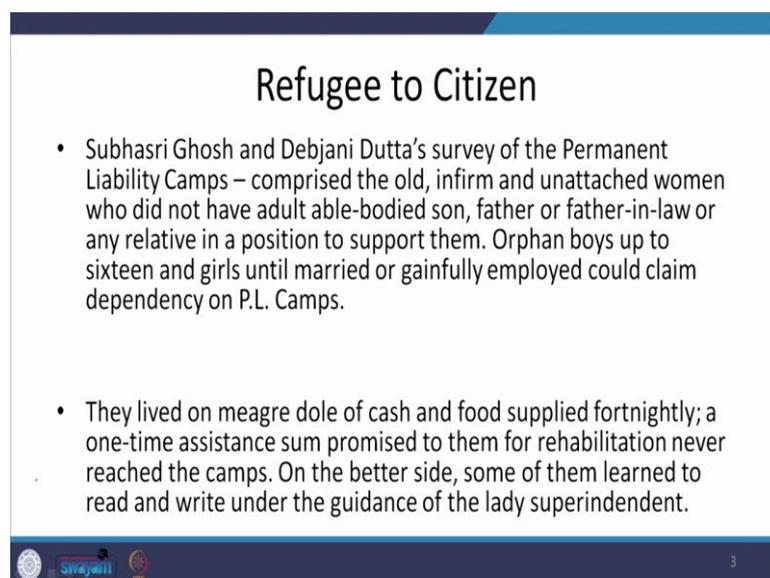
In a postcolonial state, the process of becoming a citizen is polymorphous, and it is hierarchical. A citizen is generally and typically always perceived as higher in a higher position in terms of authority, in terms of access as compared to the refugee. So, we see in different.. when we refer to different speeches by political leaders, by ministers in the

independent, newly independent Indian nation-state, we note how the refugees are inspired by the different ministers to become good citizens.

So, the idea of becoming a good citizen entails hard work, a sense of loyalty towards the nation, one's penchant for education.. to build on whatever one has lost in the past. These are some of the criteria that are officially set, I mean, some of the goals that are set for the refugees to follow and they keep coming back in the speeches of the different ministers. The label 'refugee' opens a fresh political terrain upon which citizenship is to be negotiated in a postcolonial state.

It is also a tool for gaining political influence, it is a tool for bargaining concessions from the host state. From being a refugee to becoming a citizen is a journey that is marked by one's distance from the camp life (that is very important), where one is geographically located; one's space speaks a lot in terms... one's space speaks a lot about one's refugee conditions or the lack of it.

So, one is, in a way, leaving the refugee past behind, one can overcome the camp existence, if one can buy a land for example, outside of the colony. So, that is a way of outgrowing the refugee condition, the refugee identity. There were two types of government housing facilities at that time after partition - one would be self supported, the other would be state supported. And, this was meant to be an administrative filter to separate the resource-rich individuals from the dependent masses. (Refer Slide Time: 04:57)



The slide features a blue header with the title 'Refugee to Citizen' in white. Below the title, there are two bullet points in black text. At the bottom, there is a dark blue footer containing three logos on the left and the number '3' on the right.

## Refugee to Citizen

- Subhasri Ghosh and Debjani Dutta's survey of the Permanent Liability Camps – comprised the old, infirm and unattached women who did not have adult able-bodied son, father or father-in-law or any relative in a position to support them. Orphan boys up to sixteen and girls until married or gainfully employed could claim dependency on P.L. Camps.
- They lived on meagre dole of cash and food supplied fortnightly; a one-time assistance sum promised to them for rehabilitation never reached the camps. On the better side, some of them learned to read and write under the guidance of the lady superintendent.

Swayam 3

A survey of the Permanent Liability Camps by researchers such as Subhasri Ghosh and Debjani Dutta reveals the conditions of the old, infirm unattached women. So, they were seen by the state as permanent liability and researchers go survey these camps; they study the conditions. Women mostly lived in these camps, the ones that did not have able-bodied...adult able-bodied sons, fathers or fathers-in-law or any male relative in a position to support them.

So, they were basically state-supported, and even orphan boys up to the age of 16 and girls that were not married or gainfully employed would claim dependency on the PL camps. Now, examining their conditions would reveal that they lived on mere dole of cash and food that would be supplied fortnightly. They were offered a one-time assistance sum of money that, in many cases, never reached the camps.

And, yet, on the better side, on the positive side of the rehabilitation process, we would see that some of them learn to read and write. They become literate under the guidance of the lady superintendent. So, this is a something I recall I have discussed when I was talking about women and partition.

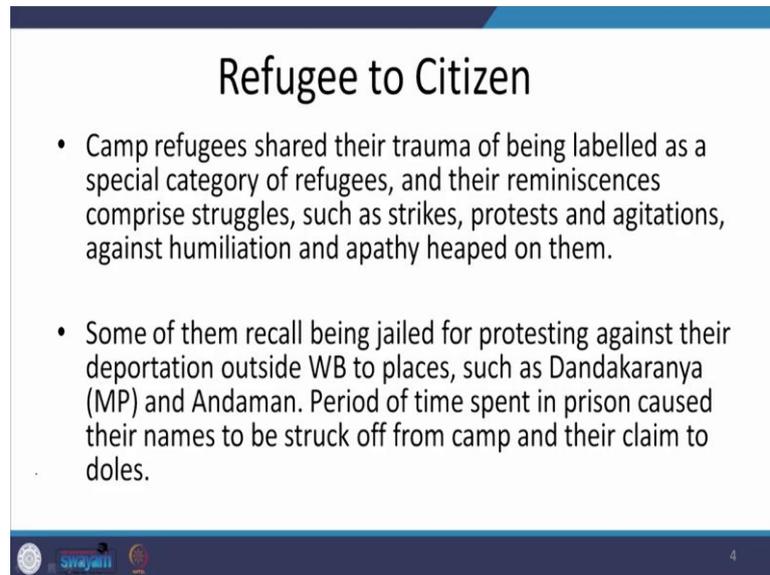
So, for some women, partition... the chaos or the tumultuous situation that assisted the process of exchange...that was associated with the process of exchange, opened up new possibilities. For some women, partition led to opportunities, such as access to education, access to jobs becoming visible in the public arena and so forth.

For others, there were mishaps... there were others that were not as fortunate; they had undergone a lot of damage. They were, in fact,...they faced the brunt of the partition process. We see that a partition opens new grounds in terms of more liberal possibilities.

In fact, when we look at the period immediately after partition, we see that unattached women especially are able to choose their partners -- something that would be unthinkable for them in the traditional setup. But, after gaining greater stability both India and Pakistan started taking vice-grips... the two nation-states held these women, the unattached women by the vice-grips.

They would extend...the state policies would extend their paternalistic control over these women, paternalistic control, a kind of surveillance, which would mean to do welfare to

these women, but at the cost of controlling and policing their movements, their choices and their sexuality. (Refer Slide Time: 09:37)



## Refugee to Citizen

- Camp refugees shared their trauma of being labelled as a special category of refugees, and their reminiscences comprise struggles, such as strikes, protests and agitations, against humiliation and apathy heaped on them.
- Some of them recall being jailed for protesting against their deportation outside WB to places, such as Dandakaranya (MP) and Andaman. Period of time spent in prison caused their names to be struck off from camp and their claim to doles.

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Coming back to the camp conditions of the women, the conditions of women in the Permanent Liability Camps, we see that the camp refugees share the trauma of being labeled as a special category of refugees, and when they look back, when they respond to interviews they talk about their struggles, their participation in strikes, protests and agitations against the humiliation and apathy that they have to brook, that they have to endure.

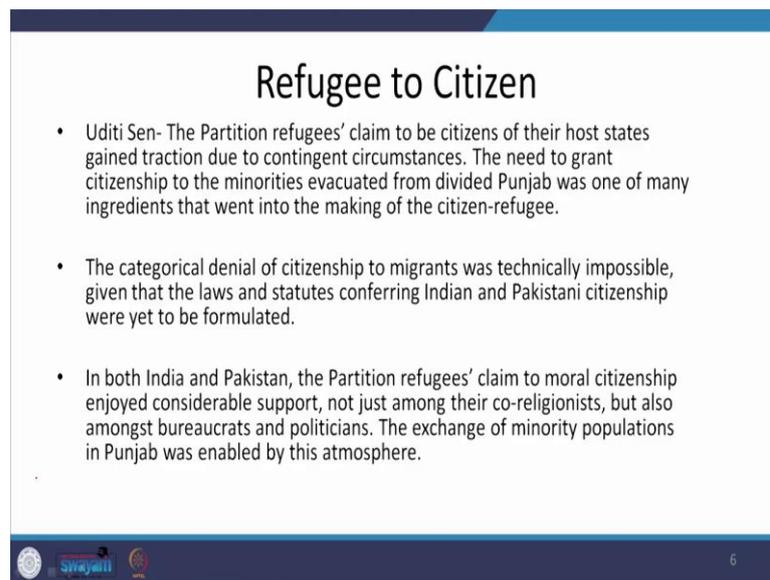
Many of them recall being jailed for protesting against their deportation outside of West Bengal. This is in the case of Bengal, where we see that the Dalit refugees, the poorer section of refugees that were displaced in the tail-end, whose displacement happened in the tail end of the exchange process,

the West Bengal government would not accommodate them within the urban space of Bengal. They would be encouraged to go resettle in the Andamans and then in the Dandakaranya forests in Madhya Pradesh. They recall.. the refugees recall being jailed for protesting against such forced deportation.

What is worse, after having spent a period of time in prison when they came back, their names would be struck off from the camp list and so, they would not be, they would no longer remain claimants to government doles. So, rehabilitation of refugees and the

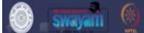
development of new nation were two things that went hand in hand, in tandem, and in a way informed each other.

So, there was this onus, like I said, on the desired image of the hard-working refugee that enables the process of nation-building, that contributes positively to the process of nation-building and organizations, such as United Central Refugee Council, UCRC voiced for the refugee's demands. For example, UCRC would demand that no distinction be made between the political and the economic migrants. (Refer Slide Time: 12:05)



## Refugee to Citizen

- Udit Sen- The Partition refugees' claim to be citizens of their host states gained traction due to contingent circumstances. The need to grant citizenship to the minorities evacuated from divided Punjab was one of many ingredients that went into the making of the citizen-refugee.
- The categorical denial of citizenship to migrants was technically impossible, given that the laws and statutes conferring Indian and Pakistani citizenship were yet to be formulated.
- In both India and Pakistan, the Partition refugees' claim to moral citizenship enjoyed considerable support, not just among their co-religionists, but also amongst bureaucrats and politicians. The exchange of minority populations in Punjab was enabled by this atmosphere.

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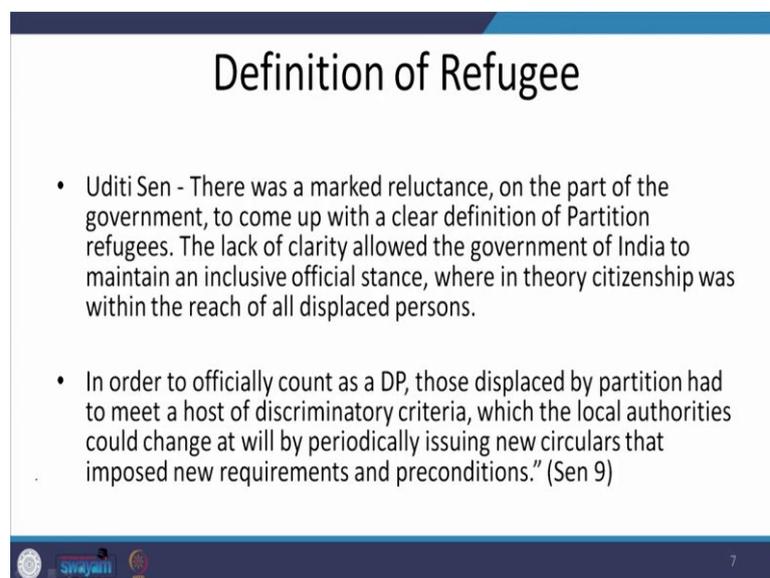
So, Udit Sen studies [that] the partition refugee's claims to become citizens in the host states gain them traction due to contingent circumstances. The need to grant citizenship to the minorities evacuated from divided Punjab was one of the many ingredients that went into the making of the citizen refugee.

For both India and Pakistan, it was technically not possible to deny citizenship to the migrants because the laws and statuses conferring or that would define the citizen from the non-citizen were still not formulated; they were yet to be formulated. I mean everything... till a point, things were in a state of flux.

And so, it would be very difficult for the abutting states to deny citizenship right until the laws became...the laws were materialized, the laws became, the laws were in a position to legally declare who was a citizen and who was not.

Both India and Pakistan... we see in both India and Pakistan, the refugee's claim to moral citizenship enjoyed support. Generally speaking, the refugees were not denied, their demand for resettlement, for access to necessary resources in the new land.

And, this support was extended not only by the co-religionists, but also at the bureaucratic and political level. (Refer Slide Time: 14:14)



The slide is titled "Definition of Refugee" and contains two bullet points. The first bullet point discusses Udit Sen's observation of government reluctance to define partition refugees. The second bullet point discusses the discriminatory criteria used to determine who could be officially counted as a displaced person (DP).

### Definition of Refugee

- Udit Sen - There was a marked reluctance, on the part of the government, to come up with a clear definition of Partition refugees. The lack of clarity allowed the government of India to maintain an inclusive official stance, where in theory citizenship was within the reach of all displaced persons.
- In order to officially count as a DP, those displaced by partition had to meet a host of discriminatory criteria, which the local authorities could change at will by periodically issuing new circulars that imposed new requirements and preconditions." (Sen 9)

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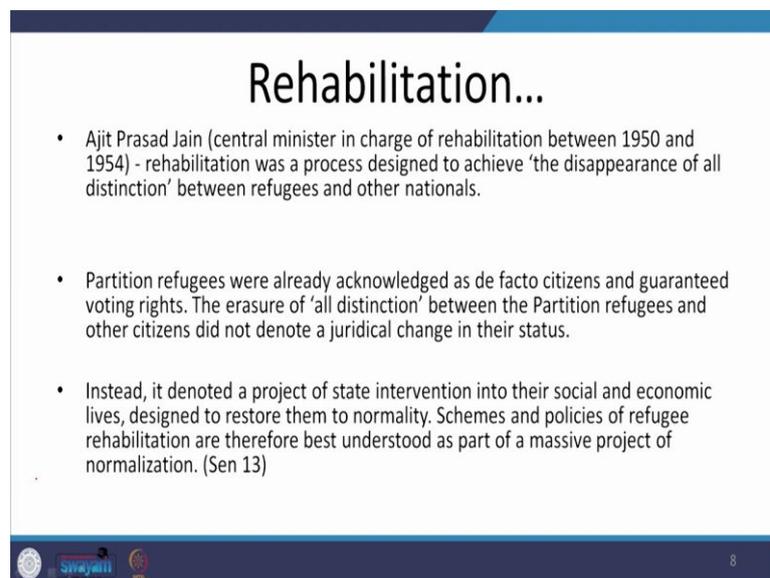
So, we see that until a certain point there was a marked reluctance, a lack of expedition on the part of the government to come up with a clear definition of who the refugee was, how to define the refugee. So, this lack of clarity enabled the government of India to

maintain an inclusive official stance, where almost all displaced persons could be given the citizenship status.

In order to officially be counted as a displaced person, such a displaced person had to meet a host of discriminatory criteria, and these criteria were not definitive till a certain point. One would not be wrong to say that the initial displaced population could take advantage of this fluid or unfinalized and inconclusive situation, where the government could not come out with a final definition of citizen and refugee.

And, everyone would be espoused within in the host land. So, like one sees, the periodically new circulars would be issued that imposed new requirements, new preconditions and new criteria for being a refugee. Displaced person was never univocally agreed upon ideas.

So, this..the person, the displaced person, the idea of the displaced person would be occasionally revised and revisited. So, everything till a point was in a chaotic state, in a state that desired greater stability. (Refer Slide Time: 16:43)



**Rehabilitation...**

- Ajit Prasad Jain (central minister in charge of rehabilitation between 1950 and 1954) - rehabilitation was a process designed to achieve 'the disappearance of all distinction' between refugees and other nationals.
- Partition refugees were already acknowledged as de facto citizens and guaranteed voting rights. The erasure of 'all distinction' between the Partition refugees and other citizens did not denote a juridical change in their status.
- Instead, it denoted a project of state intervention into their social and economic lives, designed to restore them to normality. Schemes and policies of refugee rehabilitation are therefore best understood as part of a massive project of normalization. (Sen 13)

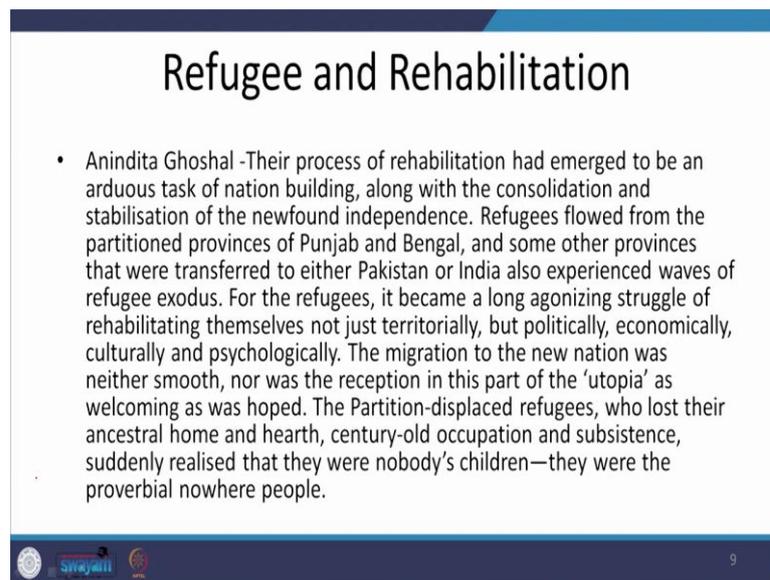
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One sees that Ajit Prasad Jain, Central Minister in charge of Rehabilitation between 1950 and 1954 says that rehabilitation was a process designed to achieve the disappearance of all distinctions between the refugees and the other nationals.

Rehabilitation is a project of state intervention, which is meant to normalize the living conditions of the displeased persons. So, these policies.. policies of refugee rehabilitation

are meant to assimilate the people that came from outside of the borders that marks, that demarcate the host land.

So, erasure of all distinction... we have to understand, that the refugees were already acknowledged as de facto citizens, and they were guaranteed voting rights. So, they were de facto citizens. So, when we talk about erasure of distinction... the erasure of distinction between the partition refugees and other citizens refer to a change/ a shift in the juridical status per state. (Refer Slide Time: 18:15)



**Refugee and Rehabilitation**

- Anindita Ghoshal -Their process of rehabilitation had emerged to be an arduous task of nation building, along with the consolidation and stabilisation of the newfound independence. Refugees flowed from the partitioned provinces of Punjab and Bengal, and some other provinces that were transferred to either Pakistan or India also experienced waves of refugee exodus. For the refugees, it became a long agonizing struggle of rehabilitating themselves not just territorially, but politically, economically, culturally and psychologically. The migration to the new nation was neither smooth, nor was the reception in this part of the 'utopia' as welcoming as was hoped. The Partition-displaced refugees, who lost their ancestral home and hearth, century-old occupation and subsistence, suddenly realised that they were nobody's children—they were the proverbial nowhere people.

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Anindita Ghoshal notes that the process of rehabilitation emerged as an arduous task of building the new nation, the post-independent nation through consolidating and stabilizing the newly found independence and through normalizing the process of.. through normalizing and assimilating/ integrating a populace that had fled from an abutting country and entered into the host land.

Refugees flowed from partition provinces of Punjab and Bengal, and some other provinces that were transferred either to Pakistan or to India. And so, all these places that experienced waves of refugee exodus, we are trying to rebuild themselves, stabilize their conditions for the refugees; it became an agonizing struggle of rehabilitating themselves not just territorially,

but in terms of a new polity, a new economic structure as well as, you know, resuscitating themselves psychologically and culturally. So, the migration to the new nation was not a smooth process. It was...so, there was always a kind of... migration to

the new nation was not a smooth process, and assimilation was always difficult; it was always fraught with cultural differences, cultural tensions and conflicts.

The utopia of a welcoming host land never met or never converged with the ground reality. The partition-displaced refugees that lost their ancestral home and hearth, the century-old occupation and subsistence, ...they had suddenly.. it is a way of, you know, tearing away from one's umbilical cord, becoming a historical [pariah] suddenly and having to adopt a new socio-cultural reality as one's own.

And, so, I would just like to end today's lecture by going back to our earlier discussion - how for these people the refugee, populace, the desh and the nation always had two different meanings. It reminds us of the case of the grandmother in Amitav Ghosh's *Shadow Lines*, where she had ...so she is the modern citizen.

She is loyal to her nation and yet, when she talks of desh she has a different impression, a different geographical scape that comes to her mind, which is not the same land that she inhabits in the current time. So, this is a fracture, this is a fragmentation beyond reconciliation that the refugee population had to carry with themselves, and the weight of this fracture is something that the host land also had to bear.

So, like I have already discussed, the elite refugee masses were in a position to assert, commemorate, celebrate their otherness in the linguistic sense, in the ethnic sense, in the cultural sense. On the other hand, the Dalit refugees would, due to lack of resources, due to lack of capital tend to, you know, lie low... like we say lie low, camouflage and adopt with whatever the new host land had to offer to them.

They did not have much at stake; they had not lost much and so, they could not bargain a lot in the new land. (Refer Slide Time: 23:12)

## Refugee and Rehabilitation

- Anupama Roy - the historical context of partition produced several liminal categories of people, who were neither fully citizens, nor entirely foreign. Within this category [there were] not just displaced persons, but also minors, Pakistani wives and abducted women.
- Roy understands the Indian Citizenship Act as a moment of encompassment. It negotiated the conflict between the ground reality of differential access to citizenship and its universal promise by offering different 'possibilities' of becoming citizens to different groups – through birth, descent or registration (Sen 16).



Anupama Roy notes how the historical context of partition produced the liminal categories of people, who were neither fully citizens nor completely outsiders.

So, within this category, they were.. I mean when we talk of the nominal position we do not talk only about the refugees, but also include the case of the minorities, the cases of the minorities, the abducted women that had not gone back to their original homes.

So, Anupama Roy understands the Indian citizenship Act as a moment of encompassment, which negotiated the conflict between the ground reality of differential access to citizenship and the universal promise of offering different possibilities of becoming citizens to different groups in terms of one's birth, in terms of one's descent or through registration. We will talk more on this topic in our subsequent lectures.

Thank you.