

Partition of India in Print Media and Cinema
Prof. Sarbani Banerjee
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
Indian Institute of Technology, Roorkee

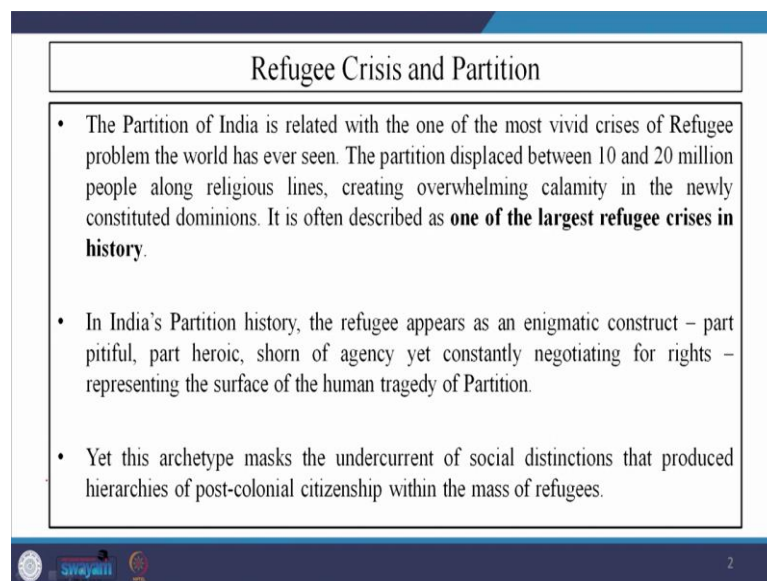
Lecture - 41
Refugee, Desh and Nation - IV

Good morning and welcome back to the lecture series on Partition of India in Print Media and Cinema. We are talking about Refugee, Desh and a Nation. We have already discussed the idea of.. we have already discussed who the refugee is in the context of the partition of India. And we were also talking about how desh, the idea of desh does not converge or overlap with the idea of nation for the immigrant populace.

While desh [is about] having this.. a sense of nostalgia about one's homeland, where one could trace one's ancestral homestead or one's ancestral property. So, the sense of belonging is mostly attached with desh, whereas the nation is a geopolitical demarcation. The formation of nation is an operation from above, and it is meant to group people together in terms of their linguistic and religious commonality.

So, the co-religionists, the co-linguists would be... or the people from similar language and religion groups would be made to stay in abutting geopolitical space, something that was determined after the British colonizers left and which led to redrawing of the borderlines. When we talk of nation, we are certainly thinking of borders and boundaries; desh heralds a more organic connection.

So, partition of India... when we talk of partition, we cannot not talk about the refugees, the displacement of millions of people, and it is often described as one of the largest refugee crises in human history. (Refer Slide Time: 02:56)



The slide is titled "Refugee Crisis and Partition" and contains three bullet points. The first bullet point states that the Partition of India is related to one of the most vivid refugee crises in history, displacing 10-20 million people. The second bullet point describes the refugee as an enigmatic construct in the Partition history. The third bullet point notes that this archetype masks social distinctions that produced hierarchies of citizenship among refugees.

Refugee Crisis and Partition

- The Partition of India is related with the one of the most vivid crises of Refugee problem the world has ever seen. The partition displaced between 10 and 20 million people along religious lines, creating overwhelming calamity in the newly constituted dominions. It is often described as **one of the largest refugee crises in history**.
- In India's Partition history, the refugee appears as an enigmatic construct – part pitiful, part heroic, shorn of agency yet constantly negotiating for rights – representing the surface of the human tragedy of Partition.
- Yet this archetype masks the undercurrent of social distinctions that produced hierarchies of post-colonial citizenship within the mass of refugees.

So, one of the largest refugee crises in human history. So, now when we look at the refugee, the figure of the refugee or the icon of the refugee, we see that the refugee in the

partition of India, in the context of India's partition, the refugee emerging as a result of the partition is an enigmatic construct who is partly heroic, partly pitiful or pitiable.

And someone who is constantly, you know, constantly compromising his or her agency and yet, fighting back ...fighting to gain back that agency or negotiating constantly for rights. So, someone that is shorn of self-charge and choices, and yet trying to find a footing, trying to gain traction in terms of policy-making, in terms of new rules and regulations that facilitate his or her resettlement in the homeland.

That is a very contradictory [position]. The refugee is constructed of contradictory features essentially. And we see that this archetype of refugee, whenever we have a congealed archetype about the refugee, we tend not to look at the hierarchies of post-colonial citizenship within the mass of refugees. This is something that needs emphasis, that needs further examination.

As I have been already talking, you know, as I have already been pointing out, there are social distinctions that prevent an umbrella...you know, that prevent any umbrella signification or meaning being adhered with the social marker of 'refugee'. So, the core principle of official resettlement policy was self-rehabilitation, and so the section of immigrants that could self-rehabilitate, that could buy their own lands, build their own housings, establish their own business without any aid from the government, were seen as the ideal refugee.

We have already talked about how the ideal refugee is the male, upper-caste individual, who is in position of certain social and cultural...socio-cultural, economic capital. So, a person's journey, from being a refugee to becoming a citizen, is determined by one's ability to become, you know, someone productive, someone that contributes in the nation-building process. So, someone that can establish himself without state intervention and then contributes to the state.

In the partition history, if we do not understand the idea of refugee, the idea of refugee is a central concept that, in fact, shapes the history of India in a significant way. So, the official narrative of partition is build around this abstract notion of refugee, which demands being unpacked. (Refer Slide Time: 07:14)

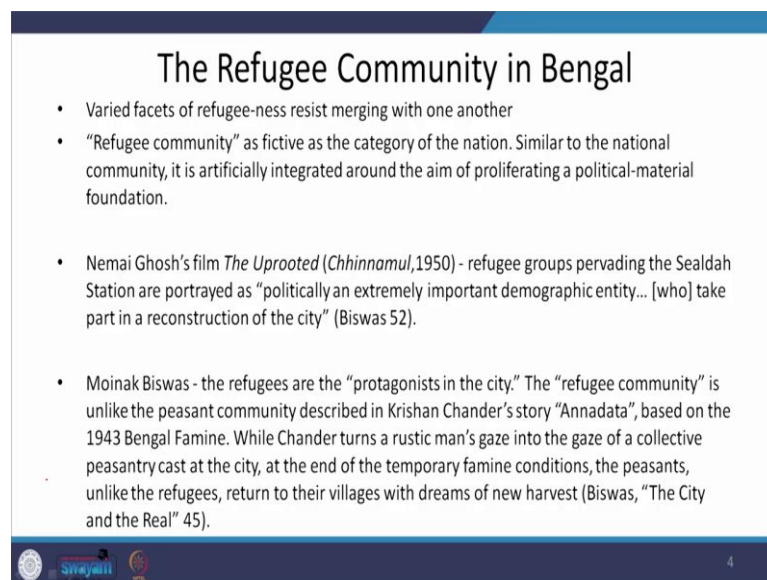
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- The core principle of the official resettlement policy was self-rehabilitation, that is, the ability to become a productive citizen of the new nation state without state intervention (Kaur, 429).
- In case of India's Partition history, the 'refugee' is a central – almost mythical – figure without which the national history of India cannot be shaped.
- The official narrative of Partition is built around an abstract notion of 'refugee experience' wherein the multitude of refugees is often articulated as a singular body with a common origin, trajectory and destiny.

So, we see that there is no refugee, but refugees to begin with, a multitude of refugee experiences.

So, we cannot articulate the process of displacement, the process of refugee experience through a unified understanding of the evacuee's origin, trajectory and destiny because these were varied, these were always-already heterogeneous. And, when we look at the case of Bengal, we see that the varied, you know, meanings or the varied facets of refugee-ness essentially resist merging with one another.

One could say that the refugee community is as fictive as the national community, and is artificially integrated around the aim of proliferating, you know, integrated around the aim of proliferating or expanding in political and material terms. (Refer Slide Time: 08:35)



The Refugee Community in Bengal

- Varied facets of refugee-ness resist merging with one another
- “Refugee community” as fictive as the category of the nation. Similar to the national community, it is artificially integrated around the aim of proliferating a political-material foundation.
- Nemai Ghosh's film *The Uprooted* (*Chhinnamul*, 1950) - refugee groups pervading the Sealdah Station are portrayed as “politically an extremely important demographic entity... [who] take part in a reconstruction of the city” (Biswas 52).
- Moinak Biswas - the refugees are the “protagonists in the city.” The “refugee community” is unlike the peasant community described in Krishan Chander's story “Annadata”, based on the 1943 Bengal Famine. While Chander turns a rustic man's gaze into the gaze of a collective peasantry cast at the city, at the end of the temporary famine conditions, the peasants, unlike the refugees, return to their villages with dreams of new harvest (Biswas, “The City and the Real” 45).

So, we see in Nemai Ghosh's film 'The Uprooted' or 'Chhinnamul' in Bengali. So, Nemai Ghosh's film 'The Uprooted', which is called 'Chhinnamul' in Bengali, was made in 1950. It focuses on the refugee groups pervading the Sealdah station and they are portrayed, they are portrayed - as Moinak Biswas would call - politically an extremely important demographic entity, who take part in a reconstruction of the city.

Moinak Biswas would go on to call them as the protagonists in the city. That is not, then, not a populace that is shorn entirely of agency. We see the gaze of the native people, of the local people on the refugee populace which is violent, which takes away agency,

which takes away power, which is extremely disempowering. And yet, as Biswas notes, there is also the question of counter-gaze, how the refugee looks back.

So, Moinak Biswas very importantly and very correctly points out that the refugee community cannot be conflated with any other peasant community. For example, the kind of peasant community that Krishan Chander describes in Annadata. Annadata is a story based on 1943 Bengal Famine, and here Krishan Chander focuses on the rustic man's gaze, the collective peasantry's gaze cast at the city.

This is similar but not quite the same, as the refugee's counter-gaze at the host directed towards the host land. This is because the peasant populace that came to Calcutta after the famine also returned to their villages with dreams of new harvest, but for the refugees, the borders tightened [and] passports were introduced, their homelands became a foreign country.

And so, they had made a journey to a point of no return; there was a point from which they could not go back. It was a journey that [was] an irreversible trajectory in a way. So, we also see how it is difficult, it is problematic to understand Bengal; the question, the refugee problem on the Bengal side...it is difficult to understand the refugee problem on the Bengal side through the lens of Punjab partition or the experience of violence that the Punjabi populace actually faced and suffered. (Refer Slide Time: 12:07)

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- A study of Bengali refugees shows how an authentic refugee type within the state discourse was fashioned after the Punjab experience of violence. This frame hardly fitted the Bengali refugees, whose journeys were not always fraught with heightened episodes of violence, and who were discursively located outside the orbit of authentic 'refugee-ness'.
- Ravinder Kaur - state policies of resettlement were modelled after the social norms, which perpetuated differences by way of segregating and isolating the refugees – untouchables from upper castes, single women from families, poor from rich.

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The state discourse, in a way, was fashioned after the Punjab experience of violence. This did not always and did not mostly fit the Bengali refugees, more so because their

journeys were not always fraught with extreme episodes of violence. In Bengal, as we know, the violence was less extreme. And so, who was the refugee...this entire definition of refugee becomes more nuanced, more discursively located outside of the authentic refugeeness.

So, Ravinder Kaur notes that the state policies of resettlement were modelled in a way that upheld, that corroborated or that embraced status quo. So, state policies of resettlement embraced and upheld status quo; they were modelled after the traditional social norms, which perpetuated differences through segregating and hierarchizing among different groups.

So, the Untouchables from the upper-castes, the single women, the married women or women that are part of family, the poorer people from the wealthy section. So, it was bringing back the social stratification that traditionally existed in the Indian society. We have already seen, I remember I was talking about how the immediate period after partition was seen... I mean it brought in emancipatory ideas, ideas that tended to free the woman from shackles of backwardness, conventionality, orthodoxy.

So, for example, the chaotic situation, the tumultuous situation was especially...it had something positive, the tumultuous situation had something positive for the woman who, for example, could choose her own partner. Because she did not have any guardian in the absence of parents, in many cases the parents were dead, the guardians were not available. And so, the girls were able to choose their own partners, but this did not, did not stay for very long, as government policies actually took unattached women by its vice grip.

And so, while the charities, doles and welfares being extended, were being given to these women, it all... these happened at the expense of controlling their sexuality and their independent decisions. (Refer Slide Time: 15:43)

Refugee and Rehabilitation

- Ravinder Kaur – In case of the making and becoming of post-colonial citizen-subjects, social, economic and cultural factors were linked to the refugees' ability to self-rehabilitate rather than depend on the state for survival and recognition.
- Self-rehabilitation symbolized a governmental technology, pursued by the Indian state, aimed at producing self-supporting citizens out of the mass of refugees.
- It can be seen as state-ordained rite of passage – from child to adult – and taking responsibility for oneself rather than depending on the state.

So, Ravinder Kaur notes that in case of the making and becoming of post-colonial citizen-subjects, one's social, economic and cultural factors played, I mean these factors, social, economic and cultural factors played key roles in ensuring the refugees' agency [and] ability to self-rehabilitate.

So, it actually determined how much the refugee would depend on the state for survival and recognition. Self-rehabilitation symbolized a governmental technology which was pursued by the Indian state, and it aimed at producing self-supporting citizens out of the mass of refugees.

The process of becoming a citizen from being a refugee was seen as a state-ordained rite of passage; it was kind of the refugee growing up to become the citizen who would take his own responsibility and responsibility of his own family, rather than depend on the state. (Refer Slide Time: 17:07)

Refugee-ness as affirmation and non-acceptance

- The refugees mostly refused to see themselves as the ones who were at the mercy of the state charity.
- Refugees believed that rehabilitation and citizenship was a right that the State owed to them on account of the sacrifices made by them- leaving behind their homes and a way of life in their erstwhile homeland- for the sake of the freedom of their country.
- Romola Sanyal and Nilanjana Chatterjee - faced with public and governmental rebuff, the *bhadralok* immigrants who settled in the squatter colonies had often resorted to politicizing their demands as refugee citizens. In a bid to be included within the Indian nation-state, they recurrently referred to the drastic "fall" of their social and economic status.

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Now the refugees... there are perspectives or points of view that clash. So, the state, the state policies define the refugee and perceive the refugee in a way, which does not agree with the refugee's self-perception. The refugees see themselves as claimant; they did not... they would refuse to see themselves at the mercy of the state charity. And this was more, this is truer...this holds true in the case of the middle-class, upper middle-class refugees; the wealthier sections did not have this situation altogether.

But for the middle-class people, the educated middle-class section it was considered as... there was a sense of indignation, there was a sense of, you know, there was a sense of

indignation when one had to accept or one had to feel that he and his, you know, dependents were at the mercy of the state charity. So, this is something mostly the middle-class refugees challenged. They believed that rehabilitation and citizenship was a right.

They were claimant to the state's resources and so, their current conditions, their present conditions had happened as a result of a national decision taken by the leaders. So, now the country has to take responsibility of these refugees, who were victims of historical circumstances.

There were sacrifices made by the refugees; the refugees claimed...a meta-narrative that emerged from the middle-class refugees is that they had made sacrifices leaving their homes behind, their erstwhile homeland, lavish style of living. They had to sacrifice all these things for the sake of the freedom of their country and for the formation of the post-colonial nations especially.

So, on the other hand, there are different ways of looking at this entire issue of the fall of the middle-class, right. This is a kind of a stereotype also - like Romola Sanyal and Nilanjana Chatterjee note. So, especially in the case of the bhadralok immigrants, the refined class immigrants' hailing from not too wealthy sections and yet who were not really poor, who belonged to upper-castes and who had to settle in the squatter colonies...

these refugees actually resorted to politicizing their demands as refugee citizens. So, they would recurrently refer to the drastic fall of their social and economic standing. And this would be narrated in a bid to be included within the Indian nation-state smoothly, without any conflict.

So, Chatterjee notes that there were different incentives that motivated the bhadralok refugees, the refined-class Bengali refugees to leave East Bengal. Unlike the case of Punjab, where violence was obvious and one had to save one's life, I mean migration was motivated by one's urge to save life.

Here in Bengal, the anxiety was not only about, you know, the fear was not only about physical harm, but also anxiety about you know losing economic opportunities, losing one's social position, reputation, social security, social mobility. And so, one wanted to

migrate and live with one's co-religionists in a Hindu-majority West Bengal. (Refer Slide Time: 21:57)

Refugee-ness as affirmation and non-acceptance

- Chatterjee- apart from fear of physical harm, anxiety about lack of economic opportunities and loss of social standing also acted as incentives in the East Bengali *bhadralok's* decision to migrate to West Bengal.
- Acquisition and self-rehabilitation on the part of *bhadralok* immigrants in the squatter colonies was a means to downplay their refugee identity with class-caste superiority.
- The refugees' determination not to go back to East Pakistan played a powerful role in forging their identity as claimants of legal protection and sympathy in West Bengal.

So, self-rehabilitation on the part of the bhadralok immigrants was a means to downplay their.. to downplay their refugee identity and instead, maintain their class and caste superiority as opposed to or in juxtaposition with the Dalit refugees. So, we see that once things start to settle down post-partition, all these categorizations, these hierarchies the different rungs of ladder, socio-economic rungs.. they are you know reclaimed, they reify, they come back.

So, the society is not a classless and caste-less and an egalitarian reality for very long. So, all these grids of identity, identity grids come back after a point, and they are claimed, in fact. So, refugee's determination to not go back to East Pakistan play a powerful role; they realize that they have to live in the host land. There is no way of going back claiming their property in East Pakistan. And so, they seek legal protection as well as sympathy in West Bengal.

Now, education plays a seminal role. Education has a very important role in the formation of the bhadralok refugee. Education enables the bhadralok immigrants' survival in the tough employment scenario in a thickly populated and economically broke post-partition Calcutta. And through education, one is also able to mark his cultural difference from the other poorer urban refugees as well as the poorer urban natives.

So, Romola Sanyal notes how there were cases, when upon news of police raids the bhadralok squatters would overnight erect illegal semi-permanent makeshift schools. So, then why schools? We understand that school is a promise for building the future citizen subjects. So, when the immigrants actually build a school in their colony in the, you know, forcefully occupied land,

there is an appeal to the authority that they not be uprooted on humanitarian grounds. So, school is a promise to rebuild what has been razed, and seeking opportunity from the authorities to let them, you know, to not be raided on humane/ humanitarian grounds. So, colony schools actually symbolized a futuristic commitment, which were initiated by responsible citizens.

So, once a school is erected by a group of educated people, they are already subscribing to the benchmark of ideal citizenry. (Refer Slide Time: 26:16)

Refugee and Education

- Education helped the *bhadralok* immigrants survive the tough employment scenarios in a thickly populated and economically broke post-Partition Calcutta, as well as mark their own culture apart from the poor urban refugees.
- Sanyal - upon news of possible police raids, *bhadralok* squatters would overnight erect illegal semi-permanent structures of makeshift schools, deterring the authority from uprooting the colony on humanitarian grounds (74). Colony schools were not only signs of deep-rooted settlement, but symbolized a futuristic commitment, as initiated by responsible citizens.
- Education helped to morally justify the act of *jabardakhal* (forceful land occupation).
- Udit Sen - almost every refugee colony, essentially comprising the upper-caste Hindu immigrants, boasted at least one secondary and several primary schools, which trained the next generation for employment and economic rehabilitation, helping to maintain the educated and cultured *bhadralok*'s identity (Sen 64). Recruiting teachers from among themselves served the cause of learning as well as forming a well-knit bourgeois community life.

So, education in fact morally justified the act of jabardakhal or forceful land occupation. Udit Sen in this regard notes that almost every bhadralok refugee colony, the refugee colonies whose chief inhabitants were the middle-class people

would have at least one secondary and several primary schools that trained the next generation for employment and economic rehabilitation, which would enable the bhadralok to maintain his cultured and educated identity. So, recruiting teachers from among themselves served the cause of learning and also facilitated the construction of a close-knit bourgeois community life.

So, the bhadralok colonies were deeply informed by, deeply inspired by the bourgeois values, the middle-class values. And, if we see several studies also interestingly point out, the colonies or in fact, the refugee settlements emulate the kind of lifestyle that one used to have back in East Bengal or East Pakistan.

So, for example, the greenery that we see, the verdant kind of locality, the verdant locality would remind one of villages in East Bengal. So, planting of trees and making the houses that, in a way, were modelled after the original ancestral homes, were different ways of preserving what one had lost beyond redemption.

So, Ravinder Kaur also points out that an individual's success was dependent on setting up one's homes, businesses and gaining employment, which...so this was a paradoxical situation, where the individual's socio-economic success was seen as the success of state policies. They were appropriated or they were in a way claimed by the state.

However, the failure to become self-reliant was perceived as an individual failure and the state was not responsible for the same. So, staying away from the colony, one's distance from colony life... actually it signified, it suggested that one had become successful; to be able to move out of the colony, distancing oneself from the refugee camps and colony life and state doles established one as a relevant and full-fledged citizen of the new nation. (Refer Slide Time: 30:03)

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- Ravinder Kaur – an individual's success was depended on setting up homes, businesses and gaining employment, which was also perceived as the success of state policies, whereas failure to be self-reliant was an individual failure that the state was not responsible for.
- Kaur - one's ability to survive outside of refugee camps and state institutions was linked to one's prospects of becoming relevant and full-fledged citizens of the new nation. The emerging citizenry was shaped by the differing trajectories of movement and resettlement traced by the refugees.

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Refugee-ness and the concept of Citizenship

- Citizenship is seen as a constant work-in-progress, shaped and realized in everyday life through strategies that newcomers adopt to negotiate different governmental authorities.
- Through the yardsticks set for defining citizenship, the state practices seek to classify and define displaced people.
- Refugee studies show that a satisfactory outcome of rehabilitation, resettlement, and adjustment process necessitates a certain complementarity between the refugees on the one hand, and host society on the other (Bose,6).
- Shelley Feldman - a major after-effects of Partition in Bengal was the postcolonial challenge of "(re)making communities" out of the contact between the West Bengali residents and the East Bengalis who migrated into the new territories of West Bengal. Tensions arose due to the dissimilar essences of "Bengaliness." (Feldman, "Bengali State and Nation Making" 112).

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Citizenship was and is seen... citizenship is, therefore, seen as a constant work-in-progress; it is shaped, it is realized in everyday life. and it is something that is realized by the refugees through negotiating with different governmental authorities, through pushing for certain policies and through constant re-moulding, revisiting of what the state has to offer to the newcomers.

So, when the state sets forth certain yardsticks, the benchmarks for defining the citizen, the state practices seek to classify and define the displaced people, through such benchmarks, through such definitions. Refugee studies show that a satisfactory outcome

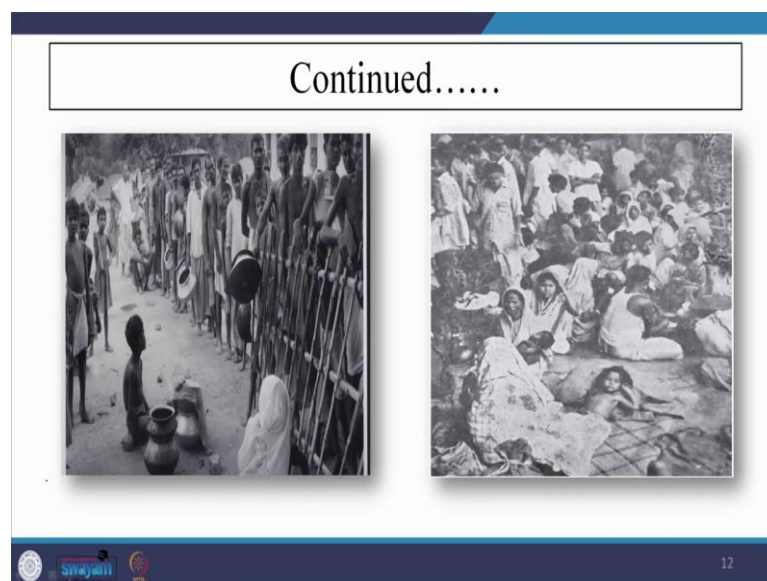
of rehabilitation, resettlement and adjustment necessitates a certain complementarity between the refugees and the host society.

Unless there is this complementarity, there is this reciprocation, rehabilitation is fraught with new challenges and problems; it cannot be full-fledged, it cannot be wholesome and satisfactory. So, Shelley Feldman notes the case of Bengal, where a major after-effects of the partition in Bengal was that there was a post-colonial challenge.

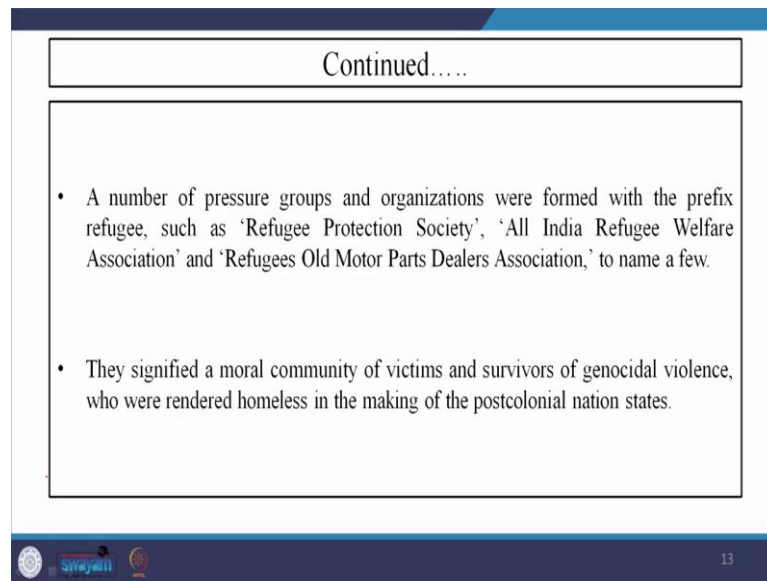
So, major after-effect of partition in Bengal was the post-colonial challenge of remaking communities, where there would be linguistic, ethnic, cultural differences between the West Bengali natives and the East Bengali immigrants, and these tensions arose due to the different essences of Bengaliness.

We have a similar experiences in Punjab too, where the migrants/ muhajirs are seen as.. I mean they are defined in a pejorative way by the natives; they are largely perceived as a populace that is taking away the local, you know, they are taking away the jobs or the economic prospects of the local people. They are taking away the lands, they are offering stiff competition to the native people.

So, there were several instances on the Punjab side also, where there would be conflicts, there would be tensions between the natives and the migrants. But they were controlled very effectively through state intervention, they were controlled, they were balked, they were balked before they could further amplify and exacerbate. (Refer Slide Time: 33:48)



So, here we can see a picture of the refugees. These are the pictures that come to our mind when we think of the social marker of refugee, standing in queues waiting for government doles. People huddled together in railway stations in public areas, people that are living in unsanitized conditions, where there are...the people living in unsanitized environments that lead to diseases, people without food and proper clothing, and so forth. (Refer Slide Time: 35:00)



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- A number of pressure groups and organizations were formed with the prefix refugee, such as 'Refugee Protection Society', 'All India Refugee Welfare Association' and 'Refugees Old Motor Parts Dealers Association,' to name a few.
- They signified a moral community of victims and survivors of genocidal violence, who were rendered homeless in the making of the postcolonial nation states.

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We see that moral community of victims and survivors of genocidal violence were formed through a number of pressure groups and organizations named as 'Refugee Protection Society', 'All India Refugee Welfare Association', 'Refugee Old Motor Parts Dealers Association', and so forth.


They rendered the homeless a kind of moral ground, which enabled them to reconstruct a new...reconstruct and access state resources, and thereby participate in the making of the post-colonial nation-states. So, I was also discussing how there is this transition or there is this different way of looking at the term refugee - some that were ashamed of being called the refugee; they would rather be called pravashi.

They would rather be called pravashi because refugee was seen as an abominable term. On the other hand, refugee as the term also signified reclaiming who one was. So, defining an organization, defining a shop through including the word 'refugee' was a way of facing up to one's situation, one's reality, and not shying away from it; someone who could demand from the state.

So, not as an individual on the receiving end of government charity, but someone who could demand whatever the state had to offer. So, we see the refugee as a term has so many different layers, so many different meanings attached to it; it could actually signify self-charge. (Refer Slide Time: 37:24)

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- At the bottom of the register of social distinctions were the state-dependent refugees who barely possessed any social capital or bargaining power to gain prime resources from the state agencies upon displacement. They were often the low caste groups, the rural and urban poor, and single women, who constituted the marginalized and who, consequently, had little influence on the ongoing political processes.



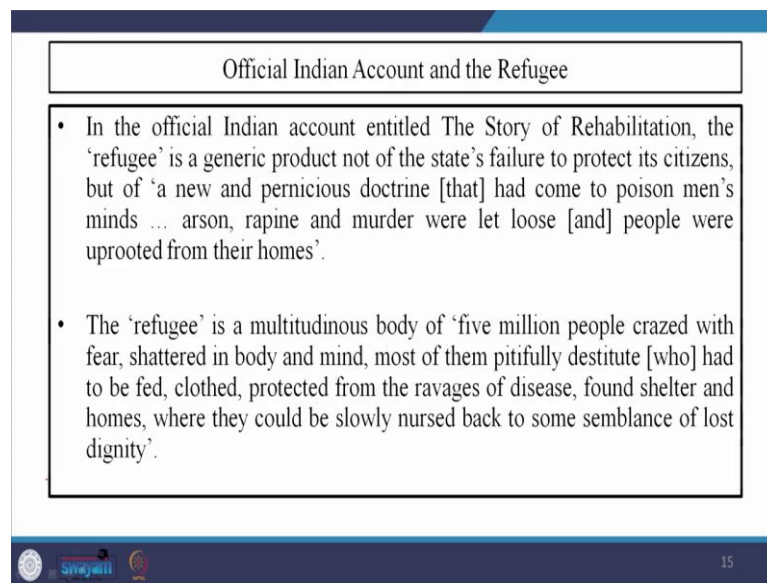
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At the bottom of social distinctions were the state-dependent refugees who suffered the most actually, who had the least social-economic capital and who bargained power to

gain resources from the state after displacement. However, the bargaining power of the Dalits, the rural and urban poor, the single women were very limited; they constituted the marginal section among the refugee.

So, in the refugee community they actually occupied the marginal positions, and so they had very little influence in the ongoing political processes. In the official Indian account entitled 'The Story of Rehabilitation', the refugee is a generic product, not of the state's failure to protect its citizen, but of a new and pernicious doctrine that had come to poison men's minds. Arson, rape and murder [were let] loose, and people were uprooted from their homes.

So, in the official definition, the state's role in escalating violence or the state's inability in stopping/stemming or, you know, the state's inability in stopping violence is not mentioned. In the official account we do not see that the state takes any responsibility for the riots and the, you know, violence that led to the partition. The definition is quite ambiguous. (Refer Slide Time: 39:43)



Official Indian Account and the Refugee

- In the official Indian account entitled The Story of Rehabilitation, the 'refugee' is a generic product not of the state's failure to protect its citizens, but of 'a new and pernicious doctrine [that] had come to poison men's minds ... arson, rapine and murder were let loose [and] people were uprooted from their homes'.
- The 'refugee' is a multitudinous body of 'five million people crazed with fear, shattered in body and mind, most of them pitifully destitute [who] had to be fed, clothed, protected from the ravages of disease, found shelter and homes, where they could be slowly nursed back to some semblance of lost dignity'.

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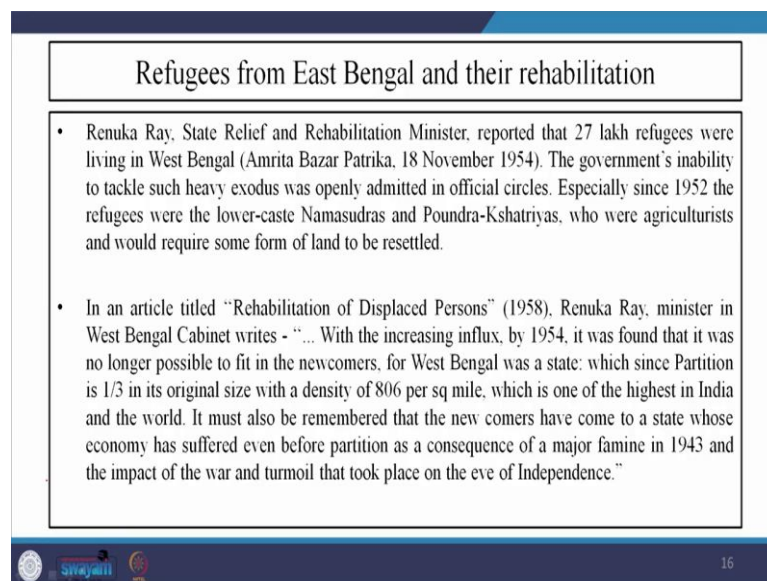
So, the refugee, according to official account, it is a multitudinous body of "five million people, crazed with fear, shattered in body and mind, most of them pitifully destitute who had to be fed, clothed, protected from the ravages of disease, found shelter and homes where they could be slowly nursed back to some semblance of lost dignity."

Like we have discussed in our previous lecture, the process of rehabilitation was also a process of resuscitating people, normalizing one's lives, bringing one back within the

fold of normalcy, normal functioning. So, one could once again...the idea was that one could revive and contribute to the nation-building process.

So, Renuka Ray, State Relief and Rehabilitation Minister reported that 27 lakh refugees were living in West Bengal, as per Amrita bazar Patrika documents. So, the government's inability to tackle such heavy exodus was openly admitted in official circles. And we see that the situation becomes worse after 1952, after the introduction of passport when the Namasudras and the Paundra Kshatriyas (these were the major Dalit castes, these were the major Dalit Bengali immigrants) that

...or let us say since 1952 after the introduction of the passport, there was a major immigration of the Namasudras and the Paundra Kshatriyas from East Pakistan to West Bengal, and this actually worsened the situations. They were chiefly agriculturalist and it would be very difficult to fit them into any other alternate occupation; and there had to be some form of land, where they could be resettled. (Refer Slide Time: 42:02)



The slide is titled "Refugees from East Bengal and their rehabilitation". It contains two bullet points:

- Renuka Ray, State Relief and Rehabilitation Minister, reported that 27 lakh refugees were living in West Bengal (Amrita Bazar Patrika, 18 November 1954). The government's inability to tackle such heavy exodus was openly admitted in official circles. Especially since 1952 the refugees were the lower-caste Namasudras and Poundra-Kshatriyas, who were agriculturalists and would require some form of land to be resettled.
- In an article titled "Rehabilitation of Displaced Persons" (1958), Renuka Ray, minister in West Bengal Cabinet writes - "... With the increasing influx, by 1954, it was found that it was no longer possible to fit in the newcomers, for West Bengal was a state: which since Partition is 1/3 in its original size with a density of 806 per sq mile, which is one of the highest in India and the world. It must also be remembered that the new comers have come to a state whose economy has suffered even before partition as a consequence of a major famine in 1943 and the impact of the war and turmoil that took place on the eve of Independence."

The slide footer includes the Swayam logo and the number 16.

So, Renuka Ray, who was a minister in West Bengal Cabinet writes that with the increasing flux by 1954, it was found that it was no longer possible to fit in the newcomers, for West Bengal was a state which since partition is one-third its original size [of the undivided Bengal], with a density of 806 per square mile, which is one of the highest in India and the world.

It must also be remembered that the newcomers have come to a state whose economy has suffered even before partition, as a consequence of a major famine in 1943 and the

impact of the war and turmoil that took place on the eve of independence. So, we understand that the Dalits had migrated mainly to save their lives.

We will talk more about these three incentives - Dhan, Man and Pran - and for the Dalits it was the pran or the life that had to be saved, and which is why they had to budge at the tail-end of the migration process and that is when the Bengal government, the West Bengal government started realizing that it is very difficult to rehabilitate them within the state itself; they need to be dispersed to other parts of India. We will discuss more on this. Today, I will end my lecture here.

Thank you.