

Assessing South Asian Internal Diasporas in the Twentieth Century: Identifying Transnationalism, Cultural Exchanges and Newer Cultural Hubs in India

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Abstract

This paper focuses not on the traditional study of diaspora but rather on the consequences of various flawed colonial policies of erstwhile British government of India as well as successive governments of India in the post-independence period that forced different segments of Indian population to move from their original home to faraway lands. The vastness of the Indian sub-continent also created a trend for the local populace to shift to different locations inside the Indian sub-continent itself with similar motives on mind. The internal shifting of a particular segment of the Indian society within the Indian sub-continent also created a diasporic feeling. This study focuses on the Bhojpuri speaking community from the Eastern part of India and Bengali, Sindhi, Parsis, and other communities. In this regard the focus is also on the driving forces that led to such a situation. Citing a few instances of transnational networking among diaspora communities, the paper analyses the nature and functioning of such networks among Indians.

Diaspora: Meaning of the Concept

According to the *Merriam Webster Dictionary*, a diaspora is ‘the movement, migration, or scattering of people away from an established or ancestral homeland’ or ‘people dispersed by whatever cause to more than one location’, or ‘people settled far

from their ancestral homelands.’ Recent writings on diaspora convey at least three discernible meanings (Liddell and Scott 1996; Ember et al. 2004). They are diaspora as a social form, diaspora as a type of consciousness, and diaspora as a mode of cultural production. It also refers to any people or ethnic population forced or induced to leave its traditional homeland, as well as the dispersal of such people and the ensuing developments in their culture. By way of a few examples, it is further suggested that these rather different meanings, have a certain use in conceptualising, interpreting and theorising processes and developments affecting the South Asian region and its diaspora that lives extra-regionally (Vertovec 1997).

Migration causes the formation of diaspora and it generates the concept of ‘Home away from Home.’ It is ubiquitous in nature as a large number of people are eternally on the move for a variety of reasons. Consequently, national boundaries have become more difficult to define in terms of identity. This however, does not negate the desire for connection and belonging with home. ‘Diaspora’ by definition returns us to an origin, a homeland, from which the communities in question have been dislocated (Das Gupta et al. 2007: 125).

Studies on diaspora help us understand, how migrants constantly invent ways to find space for liberation, along with opportunities to construct memorable or forgettable pasts. Diasporic communities carry with them rituals, customs, and their popular culture, and seem to accord central significance in their lives to religion which in some cases is even more vigorous than in ‘original home’ situations. They constantly seek a process of adjustment to make the foreign land the prototype of their own ‘homeland’, a process through which migrants claim rights, assert themselves in public spaces, move from the

margins to the centre, form kinship, establish 'authenticity', remember the past, and counter the feelings of betrayal and loss altogether.

Historical Diasporas in the Indian Context

The foundation of our present Indian-ness comes from the Aryan diaspora. According to Max Muller theory, Aryans moved from various places in the German plains which include present-day Turkey, Iran and Central Asia and were instrumental in forming the Indian ethnicity (Orsucci 1998).

Mauryan Emperor Asoka was also responsible for creating cultural diasporas. After the Kalinga war, Emperor Asoka converted to Buddhism and took up the cause of *Dhamma* (Buddhist moral code) by sending missionaries across the Indian sub-continent to countries like Sri Lanka, China and other far off areas (Thapar 1973). During Chola rule in India by Chola Kings Rajaraja I and Rajendra Chola, we find a vested interested in South East Asian countries as proven by their occupation of Java and Sumatra by crossing the Bay of Bengal (Farooqui 2011: 25). Due to such occupations, Indian diasporas took root and Hindu culture and institutions flourished in these lands.

With the introduction of Islam to India during the twelfth century, India witnessed a variety of ideas, institutions, men and material crossing the famous Khyber and Bolan passes, thus creating a huge Muslim diaspora in northern India. There were however, Muslim settlements on the coastal areas in the Malabar region, just around the period of the advent of Islam. Along with Islam, India was introduced to the Persian wheel, iron stirrup, Islamic mysticism (Sufism), Islamic form of architecture, new concepts of laying gardens (*Hasht-o Bihisht* or *Chaharbagh*), new varieties of flowers and trees (pomegranate), new skills for

artisans, new styles of Central Asian and Persian paintings and many more (Khanna 2007). With the downfall of the Mughal Empire Mughal cuisine and culture found a new abode in areas such as Hyderabad and Lucknow. Delhi was converted to a cosmopolitan city. Bengal turned English when it was under British siege. A new class of ‘Nabobs’ (White Mughals) emerged who took pride in replacing the Mughals as the ruling class and declaring themselves as the White Mughals. They separated Urdu and Persian from Sanskrit and other Indian vernacular languages.

Traditional Diaspora

Displacements of Indian communities began in the eighteenth century when mass immigration happened as part of colonial policies which created huge diasporas of South Asian nationalities across the globe. But the recent trend is different since it suggests strong undercurrents of ‘Internal Diaspora.’ This leads us to a study of Trans-nationalism, its occurrence in twentieth century South Asia beyond the conventional understanding of centre and periphery, coloniser and colonised. Twentieth century experienced mass scale migration of South Asians to far off lands, of which some were forced ones as a result of colonial policies and some were of their own choices to find greener pastures. With a population of around twenty million spread across hundred and ten countries, Indians are serving their host nations with distinction as entrepreneurs, workers, teachers, researchers, innovators, doctors, lawyers, engineers, managers and even political leaders. What gives a common identity to all members of the Indian diaspora is their Indian origin, consciousness of their cultural heritage and their deep attachment to India.

Partition Diasporas and the 1947 Saga (Indo-Pak-Bangladesh)

Based on the assumption of a deeply rooted animosity between Muslims and Hindus, the last British Viceroy Lord Mountbatten in 1947 in a hasty decision pushed for the separation of India and her population according to religion. Muhammad Ali Jinnah and Jawaharlal Nehru, the leaders of the Muslim League and of the Indian National Congress respectively, took advantage of Britain's precipitous and ill-planned disengagement from India. In this respect, the partition of British India was a prerequisite for each politician to realise his dreams: for Jinnah the dream of a separate Muslim state in order not be dominated by the Hindu majority, and for Nehru that of India's independence from British colonial rule, which he would proudly proclaim on 15 August 1947.¹

According to estimates, between half-a-million and one million South Asian men, women and children lost their lives, over 70000 women were raped and about 12 million people fled their homes.² This paper explores the centuries-old cultural bonds and interconnections (the roots and routes) between people of India and Pakistan as well as their potentially explosive future. The focus will be on the ambivalence about their shared past, the often uncanny connections in their histories and the terrifying strains of the present that are all represented in various social memories. Documentary cinematic depictions of the Partition include Amar Kanwar's *A Season Outside* (1998); Yousuf Saeed's *A Mirror of Imagination* (2006); Sarah Singh's *The Sky Below* (2007); and Ajay Bhardwaj's *Thus Departed our Neighbours* (2007) (Athique 2008).³ This paper deploys transnational syntaxes such as literature, cinema, dance, dress codes, customary rites, religious

symbolism and reflects on social, technological, and political changes. The literary publications with a focus on the Partition that have been written in English are numerous.⁴ Among the first works written in English is Kushwant Singh's famous and highly popular novel *Train to Pakistan*, which was published in 1956.⁵ The best-known novels are Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* (1991), for which he received the Booker Prize, and Jhumpa Lahiri's *Interpreter of Maladies* (2001), for which she was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for fiction.⁶

Internal Displacement in South Asia (Indian Sub-continent)

In South Asia, internal migration flows are considered to be significantly larger than international migration (Deshingkar 2005). The internal migration of people within a country's borders is of four types; rural-to-rural migration, rural-to-urban migration, urban-to-urban migration and urban-to-rural migration.

In Bangladesh, nearly two thirds of the migrations were from rural areas to urban areas. Rural-to-rural migration was 10 percent compared to the overseas migration of 24 per cent and estimates indicate a 6.3 per cent annual increase in migrations to the capital city of Dhaka (Deshingkar 2005). Since independence in 1971, two thirds of the urban growth could be attributed to internal migration, with 25 percent of the population living in urban areas in 2000 (Afsar 2003).

In India, an estimated 20 million people annually migrate temporarily (Deshingkar 2005). During the period 1999-2000, internal migration dominated all other forms of movements and accounted for about 62 per cent of all movements (Afsar 2003). During the same period, rural-to-urban and urban-to-urban

migration stood at 24.5 and 24.4 per cent respectively (Skeldon 2003).

According to the 2001 census in Nepal, the total number of internal migrants stood at 2,929,062 constituting 13.2 per cent of the population (KC 2003). This shows an increase of 3.6 per cent from 9.6 per cent reported in 1991. Out of the total internal migration, 68.2 per cent was rural-to-rural with people moving to agriculturally sustainable areas, while rural-to-urban migration accounted for 25.5 per cent (KC 2003). Internal migration in Nepal was also heavily influenced by the Maoist insurgency.

The current urban migration rate is high in Pakistan. According to the 1998 Population Census, rural-to-urban migrants accounted for 8.2 per cent of the total population (Menon 2005). One major characteristic of internal migration in the country is the significant movements related to marriage and family (Gazdar 2003). Economic migrants account for 20 per cent of the total migrants (Menon 2005).

According to the 1994 Demographic Survey in Sri Lanka, 14.45 per cent of the population migrated internally. This figure showed an increase of 0.95 per cent from the 1981 Census figures which recorded 13.5 per cent. The high proportion of female migration, both internal and overseas, is a major characteristic in migration in Sri Lanka. In 1994, 13.3 percent (a decrease from 13.8 per cent in 1981) of the male population were migrants compared to 15.6 per cent of the female population (increase from 12.5 in 1981) (Ukwatta 2005).

In Afghanistan, some recent studies have suggested a growing increase in internal migration for economic purposes. Approximately 22 per cent of rural households in Afghanistan

have at least one member who has migrated over the past five years (Opel 2005). In a recent survey in three major cities; Kabul, Herat and Jalalabad, it was found that out of the sample size of 997, nearly half had migrated within the last year from a rural area and most of them were either planning to (nearly 50 per cent) or had already settled (13.4 per cent) in urban areas (Opel 2005).

Internal migration in South Asia could be long-term or even permanent. Seasonal migration prevalent in South Asia is circular in nature with agricultural labour migrants migrating from rural-to-rural and urban-to-rural areas, as well as across-borders during harvest seasons (Afsar 2003).

Internal Displacement in India

Although India has been prone to violence, it has generated only a few refugees. However, war, conflict, human rights abuses and forced relocation have created a high level of internal displacement. It is hard to provide an exact figure of the number of IDPs (Internally Displaced Persons) in India. Regular monitoring is not possible in such a huge country which lacks a central authority responsible for coordinating data from central and state governments. The nature, frequency and extent of the causes of internal displacement in India vary to such an extent that it would be a herculean task to monitor and record them. In India, an estimated 20 million people annually migrate on a temporary basis. There is, thus huge variations in estimates of the numbers of IDPs in India. The latest report of the World Refugee Survey place the total number of IDPs in India at 507000 while the Indian Social Institute in Delhi and the Global IDP Project place it at 21.3 million (World Refugee Survey 2000; Hampton 1998).

Reasons for Recent Trends in Internal Displacements and the Diasporas

I. Political Secessionist Movements: Conflict Induced Internal Migration

- i. North Eastern India: Ethnic violence, which has become endemic to the states of post-colonial Northeast India, has often targeted migrant populations as foreigners or illegal immigrants to be sent back to their lands of origin. Since independence, North-East India has witnessed two major armed conflicts: the Naga movement primarily led by the National Socialist Council of Nagaland, and the Assam movement led by the All Assam Students Union and now largely taken over by the extremist United Liberation Front of Assam. The violence and retaliatory responses from the government and other forces that are opposed to the secessionists continue to generate a steady flow of displaced people. Like other IDPs such as the Rohingyas moving from Mizoram to Tripura and the Kukis and Nagas into Manipur and Nagaland respectively, the case of the Nepalis too has a 'spillover' impact on every state of the Northeast. Similar to the patterns observed in Meghalaya by the Khasi students, in Arunachal Pradesh against the Chakmas and in Assam by Bodos against Muslims of Bangladesh origins, violent movements deprive the victim of his home, thus causing displacement.
- ii. Kashmir: In Kashmir's war between state forces and militants, the killing of Kashmiri Pundits by fundamentalist secessionist groups, the persistent anarchy created by political instability, and the continuous violation of fundamental human rights by both the state and militant groups, have led to large-scale displacements, mainly of Kashmiri Pundits (estimated at 250000) to Jammu and cities like Delhi.

Although conditions are miserable, the displaced find camps offering better employment opportunities, education and security.

- iii. The Nepalis: The Nepalis from neighbouring Nepal, who have been migrating to Northeast India since the colonial times have long been integrated into the multi-ethnic and multi-cultural society of the region. Settled in almost all the states of the region they have, in recent times, been frequently identified as foreigners as their growing numbers have caused worry in backward regions of India. Ethnic movements in the region, thus, loosely define the term ‘foreigner’ which has resulted in Nepalis suffering large-scale evictions and internal displacement and being scattered all over India.

II. Identity-based Autonomy Movements

Identity-based autonomy movements have also led to violence and displacement. This has happened in Punjab and more recently in the Bodo Autonomous Council Area of western Assam. ‘Cleansing’ of non-Bodo communities by the Bodos through plunder, arson, massacre and persecution, has forced a large number of non-Bodos to flee. They now live in camps. The Gorkhaland Movement has been creating a huge ruckus in the hill tracts of Darjeeling and has also caused considerable displacement of people.

III. Forced Migration (Localised Violence)

Internal displacement has also arisen from caste disputes (as in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh) and religious fundamentalism (as in the case of the Mosque–Temple controversy). During the last two decades India has experienced the worst kind of communal clashes leading to displacement of populations

internally. For instance urban riots in Bombay, Coimbatore, Bhagalpur, Aligarh, and many such towns caused migrations due to fear for life and property. The state of Gujarat in recent years has become almost synonymous for victimisation of Muslim minorities by the state machinery, causing a very disturbing trend of internal displacements and forcing the residents to flee their ancestral homes and take refuge in other localities. Aggressive denial of residency, employment rights and similar other acts have led to people fleeing the area. More recently the concept of 'son-of-the soil' has caused huge problems to those who had migrated to states and have successfully become part and parcel of those states. For instance in Mumbai, Shiv Sena and other parties of similar ideology created huge problems for North Indians (mostly from UP and Bihar). The fear stems from the possibility of being sent back to the original localities in future, a reversal in the formation of an internal diaspora.

IV. Environmental and Development-induced Displacement

In order to achieve rapid economic growth, India has invested in industrial projects, dams, roads, mines, power plants and new cities, the construction of which is possible only through massive acquisition of land and subsequent displacement of people. According to the figures provided by the Indian Social Institute, estimates of national resettlement forced by development projects shows that during 1950-90, 18.5 million people were affected (As quoted in Asthana 1996: 1469). The 21.3 million development-induced IDPs include those displaced by projects for dams (16.4 million), mines (2.55 million), industrial development (1.25 million), wild life sanctuaries, and national parks (0.6 million) (Singh and Ganguli 2011: 6). Development projects, particularly dams,

have always generated serious controversy in India as they have tended to be a major source of displacement-related conflicts. According to the Central Water Commission, over 3300 dams have been built since independence and some 1000 more are under construction. Another study of 54 large dams done by the Indian Institute of Public Administration concluded that the average number of people displaced by a large dam is 44182 (As quoted in Roy 1999). Over 21,000 families were uprooted and ousted when the Pong Dam was constructed nearly 25 years ago and they have still not received benefits of any formal rehabilitation measures. The World Bank's 'Project Completion Report' for the controversial Sardar Sarovar dam on the Narmada which is likely to displace 0.2 million people has cast a shadow over the project's future.⁷

V. Newer Cultural Hubs within the Indian Sub-continent

The Indian sub-continent has witnessed huge displacements over the last one hundred years. Colonial policies may have caused great displacements during the British rule in India but surprisingly independent India continued to suffer internal displacements, some in visible form and some invisible, over a span of 50 years. In some cases the displacements left deep scars on the psyche of those displaced as in the case of the partition diaspora where a huge chunk of Biharis were sandwiched between two governments, Pakistan and Bangladesh. The internal displacements or migrations created newer cultural hubs in different locations of India which were not the original homes of the migrated populations. The communities of Tamils, Sindhis, Parsis, Bengalis, and Biharis are studied below in this regard:

- i. Tamils: The displaced Tamils from Sri Lanka reside in Tamil Nadu and other parts of India. The Sri Lankan refugees arrived in Tamil Nadu in four waves. The first wave came on 24 July 1983, and persisted till 29 July 1987 when the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord was signed. An estimated 134053 Sri Lankan Tamils arrived in India. The first repatriation took place after the signing of the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord in 1987 and between 24 December 1987 and 31 August 1989, 25585 refugees and non-camp Sri Lankan nationals returned to Sri Lanka. The second wave began with the start of the second phase of the Eelam War on 25 August 1989, when 122000 Sri Lankan Tamils came to Tamil Nadu. On 20 January 1992, after the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi, 54188 refugees were voluntarily repatriated to Sri Lanka, a phenomenon that prevailed till March 1995. Eelam War III commenced in April 1995 resulting in the third wave of refugees. By 12 April 2002, nearly 23356 refugees had come to Tamil Nadu. The flow of refugees stopped in 2002 because of the ceasefire agreement (Suryanarayan 2009).
- ii. Sindhis: Hindu Sindhis were expected to stay in Sindh following the Partition, as there were good relations between Hindu and Muslim Sindhis. At the time of the Partition there were 1,400,000 Hindu Sindhis, though most were concentrated in cities such as Hyderabad, Karachi, Shikarpur, and Sukkur. However, because of an uncertain future in a Muslim country coupled with a sense of better opportunities in India, Hindus decided to leave for India. Added to that, was the sudden influx of Muslim refugees from Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajputana (Rajasthan) and other parts of India, which fuelled their desire to return to India for they feared the situation might further strain relations between India and Pakistan. Problems were further aggravated when

incidents of violence instigated by Indian Muslim refugees broke out in Karachi and Hyderabad. According to the Census of India in 1951, nearly 776,000 Sindhi Hindus moved back to India. Unlike the Punjabi Hindus and Sikhs, Sindhi Hindus did not witness any massive scale riots. However, their entire province had gone to Pakistan and thus they felt like a homeless community. As per Pakistan's 1998 census, despite this migration, a significant Sindhi Hindu population still resides in Pakistan's Sindh Province with a number of around 2.28 million while the Sindhi Hindus in India as per the 2001 census of India were at 2.57 million (See Kesavapany 2008).

- iii. Parsis: Indian census data has established that the number of Parsis has been steadily declining for several decades. The highest census count was of 114,890 individuals in 1940–41, which included the crown colony populations of present-day India, Pakistan and Bangladesh (Census of India 1931). Post-independence census data is only available for India and reveal a decline of approximately 9 percent per decade. According to the National Commission for Minorities, there are a “variety of causes that are responsible for this steady decline in the population of the community,” the most significant of which are childlessness and migration (Roy and Unisa 2004: 8 and 21). Demographic trends project that by the year 2020 the Parsis will number only 23000 (less than 0.002 per cent of the 2001 population of India). The Parsis will then cease to be called a community and will be labelled a ‘tribe’ (Taraporevala 2000: 9, Karkal 1982; Singh and Gowri 2000). One-fifth of the decrease in population is attributed to migration (Roy and Unisa 2004: 21). A slower birth-rate than the death rate accounts for the rest. As of 2001, Parsis over the age of 60 make up 31 per cent of the

community. Only 4.7 per cent of the Parsi community is under 6 years of age, which translates to 7 births per year per 1000 individuals (Roy and Unisa 2004: 14).

- iv. **Bengalis:** Bengalis are mostly concentrated in Bangladesh and the states of West Bengal and Tripura in India. There are also a number of Bengali communities scattered across North-East India, New Delhi, and the Indian states of Assam, Jharkhand, Bihar, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Orissa. In addition, there are significant Bengali communities beyond South Asia. Some of the most well established Bengali communities are in the United Kingdom and United States. Large numbers of Bengalis (mainly from Sylhet) have settled in Britain, mainly living in the East boroughs of London, numbering around 300,000 (Office of National Statistics 2001). In the USA there are about 150,000 Bengalis living across the country, mainly in New York (Census Profile 2005). There are also millions of them living across the Gulf States, the majority of whom are living as foreign workers. There are also many Bengalis in Pakistan, Malaysia, South Korea, Canada, Japan and Australia.
- v. **Marwaris:** Marwaris comprise the people who originally belonged to Rajasthan, particularly areas in and around Jodhpur, Jaipur, Sikar, Jhunjhunu, Bikaner, Pali, Jalore, Churu, Nagaur and Alwar. There is a sizeable population of Marwaris in present-day Myanmar and Bangladesh who control major trading and commercial activities of the regions. They currently reside in the Indian states of West Bengal, Bihar, Orissa, Assam, Jharkhand, Rajasthan and parts of Maharashtra, Chattisgarh, Tamil Nadu and Gujarat. They also have almost complete control of indigenous banking,

finance and *hundi*.⁸ They introduced the *hundi* business to areas where the system was unknown, which included Chittagong, Khulna, Naogaon, Mymensingh and Arakan. The *hundi* business was introduced not only to neighbouring countries but also to those around the globe, parallel to the expansion of their business and trade networks. In many locales, Marwari immigrants over time (usually involving many generations), adopted or blended into the regional culture. For example, in Punjab, Marwaris adopted Punjabi, and in Gujarat, Gujarati. Significant concentrations of Marwari populations especially of traders are found in Kolkata in the Burrabazar area where they are leading businessmen. A large number of Marwaris are also in Mumbai, Bangalore, Pune, Chennai, Kochi and Hyderabad. In Pakistan, the largest numbers are found in Karachi, from where Pakistan's Marwari cricketer Danish Kaneria hails. Marwaris have founded businesses in neighbouring Nepal, especially in Birganj, Biratnagar and Kathmandu. Marwaris with their business acumen have migrated to many different parts of the country and to other countries of the world. In the eastern part of India, they are found in Kolkata, Cuttack, Midnapore, Asansol, Raniganj, Bankura, Siliguri, Malda, Assam, Meghalaya and Manipur and are among the most prominent businessmen (Kudaisya 2009: 87, Tripathi 1996).

- vi. Punjabis: The Punjab community is scattered over almost all states in India and they, mostly do businesses and contribute to the prosperity of their community and India.
- vii. Biharis/ Bhojpuri/ Eastern people (Purabiya): Bhojpuris are part of the traditional diaspora that was formed during colonial times. Presently, they are part of the huge migrant population which migrates within India itself. During the

colonial period, they were sent off to far off lands such as Surinam, Fiji and Mauritius as indentured labourers and at present these countries host around 45 per cent of the Bhojpuri speaking populace. They established their diasporic culture in the form of literature, folklores, folk songs and dance. *Virha/virah* songs that are sung during Holi or harvest season are for ones who had gone to far off lands to earn their livelihood, and express sorrow for their parting. The second phase of Bhojpuri migration happened internally when Calcutta emerged as the capital of British India. With the creation of job opportunities afforded by the opening of jute mills etc., the Bhojpuri speaking populace from the Eastern part of India thronged those mills and other industrial units. Thus in Bengal a sizeable population of the Bhojpuri populace got settled and a newer cultural hub was created. The third phase of Bhojpuri migration (and in this case more Biharis) took place during the Partition when they found themselves sandwiched between East and West Pakistan. This plight of the Bihari populace was termed as 'stranded Biharis.' In western Pakistan the Mohajir Qaumi Movement was a by product of their failed assimilation into the local elite culture. How they fared, is, altogether a different story. The Fourth wave of Bhojpuri migration (including Magahi speaking people who formed both the Bihari language and cultural milieu) came up during the 1971 Indo-Pakistan War for the liberation of Bangladesh. It was again Urdu (Bhojpuri being their first or second language) speaking Biharis who were targeted in Bangladesh and thus some were left in Bangladesh while some others migrated to Pakistan, but their suffering did not end there. The search for greener pastures, employment, education and various other reasons have

resulted in about 8 million Bhojpuris migrating internally in contemporary times (Bihari Muslims of Bangladesh: Online).

Dealing with IDPs in the Indian Context

It is important to identify and classify IDPs in order to assist relevant agencies to take care of their needs and aspirations. Following are a few suggestions to mitigate crises related to IDPs:

- Reducing the level of violence against non-combatants irrespective of the nature of the conflict,
- Dealing with potential and ongoing ethnic conflicts in a less harmful manner,
- Minimising communal riots,
- Executing development projects giving due consideration to the larger perspective of sustainable development and human needs, and
- Ensuring rapid resettlement and rehabilitation of displaced people.

A micro-level study of Indian IDPs by the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (2010) shows how it is possible to create a better situation by identifying the pockets of such migrations and IDPs (National and State Authorities failing to Protect IDPs: Online). Preparing a diasporic lexicon of the entire SAARC region would assist researches on diasporic studies that in turn would enable better understanding of the whole phenomenon.

Conclusion

Unlike the global scenario during the Cold War where population displacements were most frequently caused by armed

conflicts fuelled by big power rivalry, in South Asia 'low intensity wars' have generated displacement for a long time. Apart from those wars or conflicts, human rights abuses and forced relocation have also created a high level of internal displacements in various countries around the world. Although India has been prone to vicious cycles of violence time and again, it has generated relatively few refugees compared to other countries which have seen violence induced displacements. Estimating the number of IDPs in India is a challenging task as India lacks systematic monitoring due to the sheer magnitude of the country. The nature, frequency and extent of the causes of internal displacement in India vary and thus, it is a herculean task to monitor and record them all. Political sensitivities at state level prevent the release of data on the exact nature and extent of displacement. One suggestion to tackle the growing issue of IDPs in the Indian context, would be removing regional economic imbalances. It would automatically reduce the influx of populations towards the urban areas. Areas such as Orissa, Bihar, Andhra Pradesh and North Eastern hill tracts, have largely been left neglected and thus internal outflow of population from those areas towards more developed regions is a natural occurrence. They make a move generally towards metropolis to find livelihoods in order to provide for the sustenance of those back home who are on a meagre rural income.

In majority of cases, people have been forced to flee their homes due to political agendas and inconsistent development objectives. Development-induced displacement has overwhelmingly dominated the IDP scenario in India. Pattern of regionalisation, the nature of regional imbalances and their changing structure over time have to be identified when carrying out development projects so as to make dawn a new era of

economic development. Attitudes of decision-makers should change in order to avoid lopsided development of rural areas. Furthermore, policy work, training and careful designing and planning are desired, so that all issues related to IDPs can be properly addressed in the Indian context.

Lastly, to harmonise the diverse Indian society, displaced populations like Bhojpuri, Bengalis, Punjabis, Tamils and various other caste communities and ethnicities should be given due attention so as to preserve their cultural milieu and distinct identities.

End Notes

¹ See Jalal (1994), Talbot and Singh (1999), Settar and Gupta (2002), Jaffrelot (2004), Khan (2007), Wolpert (2007), Tan and Kudaisya (2008), and Zamindar (2008) for research on the Partition.

² See Bourke-White (1949) for images of the treks of refugees to India/Pakistan during the Partition.

³ For a comprehensive overview of the topic see Viswanath and Malik (2009) and Sarkar (2009).

⁴ These include among others, works by Sahni (1988), Sidhwa (1992), Bhalla (1994), Cowasjee (1995), Devi (1995), Hasan (1995), Memon (1998), Chughtai (2001), Saint (2001). For an overview of novels on or about the Partition see Zaman (2001), Fraser (2006), and Jain (2007).

⁵ Singh is one of India's leading journalists and a great writer. He is, however, criticised for depicting Muslims and women in a stereotypical way.

⁶ See Rushdie (1991), Lahiri (2001), Seth (1993), and Khanna (2004) for highly popular novels on the Partition.

⁷ If past displacement caused by dams or irrigation projects is examined, all estimates should be drastically revised upward. According to Arundhati Roy (1999: 12), author and member of the Narmada Bachao Andolan (Save Narmada Movement) lobbying group, the Andhra Pradesh Irrigation Q scheme displaced 150,000 people as opposed to its estimate of 63000 people while the Gujarat medium irrigation K scheme displaced 140,000 people instead of 63,600. The revised estimate of the number of people to be displaced by the Upper Krishna irrigation project in Karnataka is 240,000 against its initial claims of displacing only 20,000.

⁸ A *hundi* is a financial instrument that developed in Medieval India for the use in trade and credit transactions.

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