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A Study on the Social Problems Faced by the Descendants of the Refugees of
Dhubulia Refugees-Camp for Getting Education

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Abstract:

The refugees undoubtedly suffer a great deal of hardship and trauma and they also show tremendous determination to make the best of a bad situation and to prepare for the day when they can resume a normal way of life. This determination is to be seen most clearly in the very high value which refugees place on all forms of education. Indeed, experience shows that once refugees have met their basic need for food, water and shelter, their primary concern is to ensure that their children can go to school. Tragically, the international community has tended to place less value on education than refugees themselves. With humanitarian needs growing in many parts of the world, the funding available for refugee assistance program has become progressively tighter. In many situations, this has meant that the resources available for education have declined. It is impossible to calculate the immense costs that are incurred by depriving refugees of education. A refugee who goes without education cannot look forward to a more productive and prosperous future. A refugee who is unable to attend school or a vocational training course is more likely to become frustrated and involved in illegitimate or military activities. A refugee who remains illiterate and inarticulate will be at a serious disadvantage in defending his or her human rights. The education of refugees is an important but neglected humanitarian issue. Education provides opportunities for students, their families and communities to begin the trauma healing process, and to learn the skills and values needed for a more peaceful future and better governance at local and national levels. Now, it is very much relevant and equally important, the problems of the descendants of refugees in getting education. There are so many different kinds of problems faced by them whether it is problems in school regarding teachers, regarding understanding or about the family problems or other social problems. Struggling with all these odds, the descendants of the refugee are to get education and get development. This study will explore the social problems faced by the descendants of the refugee in the way of getting education.

Keywords: Trauma, Illiterate, Humanitarian, Struggling, Descendants

Introduction:

Partition of Indian Sub-continent between India and Pakistan in 1947 created one of the world's largest migration problems. Punjab in the north-west and Bengal in the eastern border were the main epicenters of these migration problems. Near about fifteen million people were displaced with close to two

million killed. Though the scale of violence was very high in the western border but situation was under control within one or two years. However, what is unique about the Bengal partition is that unlike the massive exchange of population in 1947-48 and till 1950 on the western border, the influx of refugees continued for many years after partition and continues in different forms on the eastern border of India. Therefore, the displacement and migration from East to West, that is former East Pakistan and now Bangladesh to West Bengal is still a reality. Though the Migration of the Bengali Hindus from East Pakistan is a ceaseless process but there are some specific developments which accelerated the refugee flow from East.

The Hindus of East Pakistan have been facing many odds like disrespect to religion, insulting to the aged girls and housewives, forcefully cows, goats even crops were taken by the Muslims. Not only with these illtreats of the Muslims but also there is a ray of hope to the Hindus that if they could intrude to West Bengal, not only they could live with honor but they also will get education for their child's development and final settlement.

Education is increasingly viewed as the "fourth pillar", or a "central pillar", of humanitarian response, alongside the pillars of nourishment, shelter and health services (Norwegian Refugee Council et. al., 1999: 26; Midttun, 2000a: 3-4; ICWAC, 2000: 9). Children are vulnerable and dependent, and they are developing, not only physically but mentally and emotionally. The sudden and violent onset of emergencies, the disruption of families and community-structures deeply affect the physical and psychological wellbeing of refugee children. (UNHCR, 1994: 5-6).

There are studies which explored the rehabilitation and the process of influx and the development works by various agencies. Specifically, problems of the displaced refugees in West Bengal from Purbo Bangla/ East Pakistan/ Bangladesh in getting education of has not been emphasized. Again, problems in learning or getting education have been remaining mostly untouched. This study will explore in details of the social problems faced by the descendants of the refugee of Dhubulia Refugee Camp, Nadia, WB in getting education.

Methodology:

At the very beginning, the researcher met few descendants of Dhubulia Camp in the district of Nadia in West Bengal. The researcher discussed with the social problems enlisted in Annexure-I. After discussing, those which are the most important problems to the descendants of the refugees, have been enlisted in the Annexure-II. Now with the problems in Annexure-II, 112 number of descendants are met and consulted. Then direct interviews have been conducted. What they are thinking of the problems, which was the most severe problem, which one is second major problem and so on. With their opinion Table-A has been framed and then the problems are ranked as per the gravity of the problems.

The Problems:

The researcher met some descendants of Dhubulia Refugee Camp, Nadia and discussed with the following social problems might be faced by the descendants of the refugee.

Annexure- I

Serial Number	Problems
1	Food problem
2	Child nutrition
3	Want of house
4	Want of Clothes
5	Attitude of local populace toward the refugee-children
6	Want of at least little educated person in the family to guide
7	Attitude of political parties
8	Attitude of Government and rehabilitation
9	Lack of security
10	Want of drinking water
11	No right to acquisition of land
12	Admission problem
13	Lack of intra harmony among refugees
14	Egotistical nature
15	Lack of engagement in regular works
16	Language problem

Then the researcher identified more significant social problems faced by the descendants of the refugees in getting education from the opinion of the then descendants. The problems are once more surveyed among the descendants of the refugee and most significant and least significant problems and the others are identified and modified.

The significant problems identified by the descendants of the refugees are:

Problem Serial Number	Problems
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1	Food and housing problem
2	Admission Problem
3	Clothing Problems
4	Playing card, smoking, gonjika sebon by the refugee
5	Attitude of local populace toward the refugee-children
6	Want of at least little educated person in the family to guide
7	Attitude of Government
8	Attitude of political parties

The social problems which are not noted in Annexure- I but in Annexure-II have been identified by the descendants. All the problems identified in Annexure-II are enlisted in consultation with the descendants of the refugees; which affected them more in getting education.

Problems of food and housing:

With the following incident, food problems of the refugee can be imagined.

Mr. K. Bandyopadhyay, a Brahmin Hindu Bengali District Magistrate under the British Raj, had to leave everything behind when his house in Dhaka was surrounded by a few hundred Muslims who wanted to make an example out of him and his family by killing them and burning their house to the ground. Eleven sentries, who were also Muslims, guarded the house and made the family run for their lives in the middle of night with only the clothes on their backs. When they reached West Bengal, they had nothing and were forced to live under a tree, cooking whatever they found growing near the outskirts of a pond. The suffering was so intolerable that his wife died shortly after they reached West Bengal, leaving behind five daughters and a baby boy.

After working whole day in the field of the native people, met the master and requested to pay the charges. Then the land lord said.. Banglaa theke kabe asechhis? (When have you come from East Bengal?)

Dada, 1 basor. (Year)

Ooo, 1 basor? Thik aachhe, natun natun asechhis taai toke maarlam naa. Baari jaa. Aabar 1 saptaaho pare aasbi.(Ok, you have just come so, did not beat. Go home. Come after 1 week.)

The labour with his wage, would buy rice for feeding his children and parents. What would they eat that day? How they would think of schooling.

There are thousands of tragic stories that can be found in each side of Bengal, and some are darker than what was described above. Women were often raped or had to use their bodies to earn money to feed their families. In the refugee camps, young women were sold for money and both religious groups used women to their advantage. Decent people became beggars, thieves, and murderers.

It was not such that the situation was changed within a six months or two years period. This had been continuing for years with decaying the trauma.

When these types of struggles were to face, how the refugee could send their descendants to schools for education.

Clothing Problems:

After a struggle of few years, when there had the shelter at least to pass night and food problem was mitigated, there arose the need of proper clothes to go to schools. Most of the refugee families were to pass through this phase for one may be 2 years for others may 7 years. While there were clothes but there was no money to wash the clothes. In such measurable condition was with most the descendants of the refugees.

Attitude of Local Populace:

Attitude of local people was mixed type. Some were sympathetic and some were unfriendly and some were extremely against the intruding of the refugees from East Pakistan to West Bengal. Those who were sympathetic, they many times exploited the refugees and their children in their needs. They did not help the children make them going to school rather they like the children to be labourers in their field or gardens. Very few were huminitic. Few examples which have been collected may be depicted here.

The example of the land lord in paying the wage to the refugee labour is an ideal example of the attitude of local people toward the refugees.

Some descendants shared that while they used to go to school, the native young boys would utter 'Ai Baangla, baari phire jaa, toder aabar school kiser, jon-poret dibi amader barite.' (Hey Bengali, go back home, you! going to school, looks ridiculous. You will be labour only in our house). It was like the white people abuse the black people as black, the Hindu uses Nare for the Muslim, the Muslim uses Charaal or Maalaayaon for the Hindu or the aristocrats use chhotolok for the SC ST etc.

A refugee-descendants were returning home from school. In the way few boys were playing football. Suddenly the football went away in the nearby pond with a heavy kick. Then the boys playing forced this refugee-boy to go down the pond for collecting the football. The elders were enjoying the cruel game. Highly inhumane behavior from the society, it was. Most of the school going refugee-children who would face these types of behaviour from the society including other odds, would leave school.

Attitude of political parties and Government:

The East Pakistani Refugee witnessed a rehabilitation programme of an adhoc nature. In the East, phases of Government aid were followed by phases of denial. So, whereas, the earliest phase of migration from East Pakistan (1946-1949) saw minimum aid from the State Government and almost nil from the Central Government, it was the next phase of migration (1950) which actually

saw both the governments wake up to the issue of migration in the East. It is seen that the nation-state was moving slowly towards defining its territory and its people as it progressed more and more away from the year of Independence and Partition. As a corollary, the influx of migrants from EastPakistan was regulated even more strictly.

Migration in the East began in the immediate aftermath of the Direct-Action Day violence in 1946 itself. But these first migrants belonged to the upper classes, and though often guided by the experience of actual violence, for many the decision to migrate was often politically motivated. This first batch of refugees was more or less capable of self-rehabilitation. Yet, among them there was a small minority which depended upon the Government, specially the ones who came after the Khulna riots of 1949. It was for them that the first relief measures were provided by the Government.

In the initial stages, when migration was not such a serious problem, the Government did not really think of organising any such camp for the incoming refugees. But as the influx kept on increasing, the need for refugee camps also increased. There were quite a few relief camps set up in West Bengal for the refugees. But the two which stood out in terms of size and population were Dhubulia Camp and Cooper's Camp.

The government at the early stage, tried to provide tent and foodings. Water was almost not available. So, cholera took lives of uncountable refugee-children. Again, there loomed another threat which was equally dangerous-predatory animals. Lack of privacy in the camp homes was yet another complaint many refugees had. With four to five families housed in the same tent/ hut, it was simply difficult to maintain privacy. Government assistance for separate tent or housing for different refugee family was not present. Later on, the refugees got housing assistance etc. The West Bengal Land Development and Planning Act 1948 came for the settlement of the refugee.

It was very crucial, the role of the political party and the society how the refugee will be settled and how they will manage their daily needs and their children will start going to school. Some were really sympathetic toward the development of the refugee and most of them worked for the vested interest of self and the party. As a result, the settlement of the refugee had been delayed.

Problem of Admission to school:

Before establishment of refugee school, it was problem for the descendants of refugee to be admitted in schools. Later on, it was also problematic to be admitted because it was asked to submit various government cards and papers as the proof of refugee. But naturally, they would not preserve those documents and faced difficulties to admit their children in schools.

Playing card, smoking, gonjika sebon by the refugee:

At first meeting time, this point was not included. But while the descendants of the refugee were consulted, they expressed that it was a great problem for

the children to get education. While the government was providing a good amount of relief, some refugees used to play cards and smoke ganja. They were ignorant about their children's learning or going to schools.

Want of little educated person in the family:

Most of the refugees at Dhubulia Camp was mainly farmers. They had little educational background. A very few families were there where there was a VIII standard person who might guide the refugee children at least in reading and writing Bengali and could provide the concept of number, addition, subtraction, multiplication and division, profit loss or unitary method. Therefore, most of the descendants of the refugee would not get any help at house. School was the only place to learn and develop understanding.

Nutrition:

It was a problem for the refugee children but was not identified by them. They while struggling for managing to eat full belly twice, how they thought of nutrition.

Lack of Security:

According to the descendants of the refugees from East Pakistan (Bangladesh) and settled in Dhubulia camp, every time, there was insecurity. Insecurity at night, insecurity in day time while the male young went outside, insecurity at work place were prevailing. But these would not affect much in child's educational path.

Lack of intra harmony among refugees:

This was a common problem. As per the Descendants of the refugee concerned, this lack of unity and problems with harmony were present when they were in East Pakistan also. In any society, it must persist. But it was not so important enough to affect a lot in getting education of the descendants of the refugee.

Lack of engagement in regular works:

It was true that there was no regular work. The refugees were to search alternatives for collecting one Kg of rice. As a result, the refugees were demotivated for their child education. This part is already taken care of in food & shelter problems or poverty of the refugees.

Egotistical nature of the refugees:

As per the refugees, it is true that the refugees had the self-respect and egoistic nature. They would speak straight forward. They did not think about the consequences. What he is thinking and what is right to him, he must express. For this nature, may be some times, they had to suffer but it was not that great problem in getting education.

Language problem:

Although the language of the descendants of the refugees is Bengali yet there were differences in diction and wordings. So, sometimes the language was illegible to the native people. Sometimes, the local people jested at the language used by the descendants. But this did not affect much in learning.

Data Analysis

With the problems listed in Annexure- II, data has been collected on- which one is the most severe problem and which is second, third and so one. Opinions from 112 number of descendants were collected.

The summery has been tabulated below-

Problem No. (As in Annexure-II)	Number of descendants identified each problem as 1 st , 2 nd , 3 rd and so one								
	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	Total
1	31	26	13	18	9	8	6	1	112
2	17	16	18	14	14	13	13	7	112
3	12	13	18	16	16	18	10	9	112
4	5	9	13	10	13	16	19	27	112
5	4	10	11	10	14	20	17	26	112
6	18	17	17	16	18	11	9	6	112
7	15	10	11	14	12	14	17	19	112
8	10	11	11	14	16	12	21	17	112
Total	112	112	112	112	112	112	112	112	112

Calculation of Score:

ByFactor Analysis the above qualitative dats has been quantified as below.

Out of the eight number of significant problems, the problem identified as first has been given highest point and it is 8. Problem identified as second has been given next highest point that is 7 and so one that is problem identified as eighth has been given lowest point that is 1. With this weightage, total points expressing the severity, obtained in each problem as per opinion of the descendants of the refugees has been calculated.

Points scoring

For Problem no. 1 in Annexure- II:

$$\text{Total points} = 31 \times 8 + 26 \times 7 + 13 \times 6 + 18 \times 5 + 9 \times 4 + 8 \times 3 + 6 \times 2 + 1 \times 1 = 671$$

For Problem no. 2 in Annexure- II:

$$17 \times 8 + 16 \times 7 + 18 \times 6 + 14 \times 5 + 14 \times 4 + 13 \times 3 + 13 \times 2 + 7 \times 1 = 554$$

For Problem no. 3 in Annexure- II:

$$12 \times 8 + 13 \times 7 + 18 \times 6 + 16 \times 5 + 16 \times 4 + 18 \times 3 + 10 \times 2 + 9 \times 1 = 522$$

For Problem no. 4 in Annexure- II:

$$5 \times 8 + 9 \times 7 + 13 \times 6 + 10 \times 5 + 13 \times 4 + 16 \times 3 + 19 \times 2 + 27 \times 1 = 396$$

For Problem no. 5 in Annexure- II:

$$4 \times 8 + 10 \times 7 + 11 \times 6 + 10 \times 5 + 14 \times 4 + 20 \times 3 + 17 \times 2 + 26 \times 1 = 394$$

For Problem no. 6 in Annexure- II:

$$18 \times 8 + 17 \times 7 + 17 \times 6 + 16 \times 5 + 18 \times 4 + 11 \times 3 + 9 \times 2 + 6 \times 1 = 574$$

For Problem no. 7 in Annexure- II:

$$15 \times 8 + 10 \times 7 + 11 \times 6 + 14 \times 5 + 12 \times 4 + 14 \times 3 + 17 \times 2 + 19 \times 1 = 469$$

For Problem no. 8 in Annexure- II:

$$10 \times 8 + 11 \times 7 + 11 \times 6 + 14 \times 5 + 16 \times 4 + 12 \times 3 + 21 \times 2 + 17 \times 1 = 452$$

Final score (Most intense problem will have highest score) of the problem each:

Problems number as in Annexure-II	Problems	Score	Rank
1	Food and housing problem	671	1
2	Admission Problem	554	3
3	Clothing Problems	522	4
4	Playing card, smoking, gonjika sebon by the refugee	396	7
5	Attitude of local populace toward the refugee-children	394	8
6	Want of at least little educated person in the family to guide	574	2
7	Attitude of Government	469	5
8	Attitude of political parties	452	6

Now the above problems are listed in the table below as per their rank that is as per the gravity of the problem.

Rank	Score	Problems
1	671	Food and housing problem
2	574	Want of at least little educated person in the family to guide
3	554	Admission Problem

4	522	Clothing Problems
5	469	Attitude of Government
6	452	Attitude of political parties
7	366	Playing card, smoking, gonjika sebon by the refugee
8	394	Attitude of local populace toward the refugee-children

Findings:

It is seen that there are many social problems, the refugee-children have face in the route of getting education. Some problems gave them huge hurdle, some created little barrier. The descendants of the refugees identified the poverty that is food and housing problems including the problems of clothing as major problem. Other much significant two problems are want of educated family member and the problem regarding admission to school. Other problems like government attitude, attitude of political parties, playing card etc. by the refugees and attitude of the local populace contributed obstacles significantly to the descendants of the refugees in getting education.

Conclusion:

From this study, it is observed that there were many social problems faced by the descendants of the refugees. Due the problems, they were not able to get education easily. They had to struggle hardly to learn. According to them, food and housing problems is the most severe problem which hindered them to get education. Want of educated people in house, admission problem then clothing problems again were three major problems. Then one by one attitude of the government, political parties or playing cards etc. and attitude of the local populace created huge problems to the descendants of the refugees. From the direct interview, it is seen that, there were numerous cases of inhumane behavior from the local population. However, they tried the best to get education ignoring these difficulties as much as possible.

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