

Module A: Protection and Punishment: The Faultlines of Caste, Gender, Religion and Race

Migration, Gender and Race: The Word “Rohingya” as Bullying

The article examines the manner of nationalist othering that occurred against everyday life of Indigenousⁱ People after the Rohingya influx in a sovereign state of Bangladesh. Indigenous People in Bangladesh are subject of othering, due to their differences in appearances and socio-cultural practices as well as their complex historicity in the state of Bangladesh. This othering is felt by indigenous persons in everyday life where they encounter bullying based on their appearances, food habits and ways of lives. However, after the Rohingya refugees fled the extreme violence committed in Myanmar and took shelter in Bangladesh in 2017, the nature of bullying faced by indigenous population in various parts of Bangladesh changed. During my seven months of fieldwork among, interviews with and ethnographic observations of indigenous women of the Chittagong Hill Tracts living in Dhaka, all my interviewees mentioned multiple incidences of harassment happened to them by the majority Bengali community in reference to the Rohingya refugees. This article focuses on the concept of “othering” through words, and other forms of verbal and non-verbal bullying experienced by indigenous women before and after the Rohingya influx in 2017. I also aspire to explore how nationalism plays a role in it. In particular, how nationalism is experienced and perceived through these daily interactions. In order to do so, first I would like to examine how language is used to create 'otherness' in the interactions of day to day lives. Second, the significance of places or situations where these incidents of 'othering' occur. And third, how these places and use of words/language affects the indigenous women's emotional, psychological and physical wellbeing. Finally, the concept of nationalist othering is crucial to understand power structures, as well as historical conditioning of refugees and, in this context, indigenous peoples of CHT.

Keywords: Nationalism, Othering, Indigenous people, Ethnicity, migrant refugee, and Rohingya.

ⁱ Indigenous- In ILO (International Labour Organization) convention 107 and 169, and UNDRIP (United Nation Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous peoples) Self-identification is seen as one of the criteria in deciding on when a group of people may be considered as 'indigenous'. Keeping that in mind whether they are classified as 'tribal', 'indigenous' or known by other country specific terms the self-identification meant to be promoted through the ILO convention and UNDRIP are the same for all groups of people. By keeping such considerations in mind I use the term 'indigenous' in this paper.