Camp formation in South Asia by Nasreen Chowdhory

Space of a refugee camp in South Asia can be problematised from various theoretical perspectives. Building on Michael De Certeau's differentiation of 'place' and 'space'[1], Auge (1995:80) conceptualizes space in lines of an 'anthropological space'. Despite of its abstractness as mere geographical variable, "space" inherently comprises in itself both aspects of "place" and a "non-place" (ibid). The actuality of a "place" is conditioned by its "historical, relational and identical" existence for an individual. When the people who occupy a particular space strives to nurture and protect their history, relationships and identity associated with that space through rituals, traditions and practices, then they carve a "place" out of that abstract "space" (Auge, 1995:42). The population within the boundaries of a 'place' thus develops a collective identity shaped by the "unformulated rules of living know-how" (ibid.:101) that would eventually inculcate a common sense of belonging within the inhabitants of the 'place'. The concept of "non-place" does not have the variables of "history, relations or identity" associated with it, rather it is characterized by the absence of those variables (Auge, 1995: 78). These 'non-places' are unstable and dynamic spaces that are in constant flux, it can only inculcate a strange sense of acquaintance for those within rather than developing the notion of belonging in them. Apart from being a definitive outcome arising from the various contingencies of "supermodernity"[2], refugee camp epitomizes the "space of indistinction" (Diken, 2004:91) central to a 'non-place'. Like an entity who enters the demarcated space of "non-place is relieved of his usual determinants" (Auge, 1995:103), the constituting characteristics of an inmate entering the spatial boundary of the camp is relegated to the oblivion. The "exterritorial" nature where "they are 'in' but not 'of' the contexts in which they are located exceptionally" is what is common both to the conceptualization of 'non-place' and refugee camps in general (Diken, 2004:96, Minca, 2005). By the same logic of this comparison, refugee camps function as "non- symbolized abstract spaces" that do not associate "meanings, traditions and sacrificial or ritual moments" (ibid). In perpetuating the 'logic of exclusion', refugee camps could be compared to the conceptualization of non-place so much so that "non-place territorializes the biopolitical operatives of camp via the exclusive entrances and exits" (Sharma, 2009:135). But from the perspective of refugees, the camps in South Asia differ from this analogy of non-places. The brief historiography of camps provided in the beginning of the chapter ascertains that 'logic

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[1]Certeau in turn builds on the distinction made by Merleau-Ponty on geometric space and anthropological space. If 'space' is where the individual is situated, the individual's experience of "seeing" and "doing" transforms the space. While "seeing" focuses on observing the "inventories" constituted by the geometric space, it is the "doing" of an individual that shapes his/her "relational, historical and identical" underpinnings that constitutes an "anthropological space" (Auge, 1995).

[2] "Super modernity" simulates conditions of excess and superfluity that creates spaces that are in perpetual transition. The extravagant indulgence created by super modernity opens up 'non-places' like airports, supermarkets, highways etc. where mostly one's collective identity is irrelevant. The only time it is warranted (if at all) is during the entry and exit to such spaces, where one's documented identity becomes relevant. In these 'non-places' only a shared identity such as that of a co-passenger in airport, co-traveler in a parking lot or co-pedestrian in a shopping street is created and all relations are conditioned by formulated rules such as the code of conduct/rules that a passenger in the airport has to adhere to. (see Augé, 1995:102-11 Non-Places as accessed from https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/43032477.pdf)

of exclusion and segregation' that epitomizes the refugee camp is in fact a colonial inheritance which is being co-opted by the post -colonial states. The camp refugees inculcate a 'sense of belonging' in the 'space' of the host state and to the host population during exile, owing to the shared culture and ethnicity. The ethnic kinship between people in the host state and the refugees is one among the factors that shape this belonging, as refugee groups have an inherent inclination to "seek asylum in a society that shares a similar language, culture and kinship structures" (Chowdhory, 2018:30). The post-colonial nation-state that hosts them might factor in the shared ethnic affiliation as a potential threat that would encourage more influx of refugees or instill an aversion to the repatriation process, which over a prolonged period can precipitate political unrest due to changed demographic pattern of the population. This perception of the host state only incentivizes the biased protection of refugees and asylum seekers by restricting them to camps. In doing so it invokes unique exceptionality for the refugees inhabiting the perennially exceptional space of refugee camps. Drawing on Malkki's (1995b) observation and based on the empirical cases of Chakma refugees and Sri Lankan Tamil refugees in India, Chowdhory (2018:35) asserts that the camp refugees perceive themselves as "de-territorialized people with deep associations with the physical location of campsite" and "seek to re-territorialize in exile in camp". Then the universality of refugee camps being a 'non place' can be contested by the refugee camps in South Asia. This notion of camp being a 'non-place' characterized by absence of history, relations or identity, is contested by the camp inmates in South Asia through a sense of belonging stemming from their shared ethnic/cultural/linguistic affinity with the host population.

Refugees, Displacement and Migration: Keywords on Culture by Rajat Kanti Sur

Culture or performance is not new to the study of migration. It has developed with new issues and questions. Through the different modes of expression, culture narrates the identity of a refugee, the crisis faced by a migrant or displaced person and at the same time their protest towards the cultural practices of the ruling community. Cultural differences may prominent when they are coming into contact with two or more contacts. Cultural contact becomes crucial during international migration when immigrants from one national group come into contact with a different national group of a different country or region. The term acculturation refers to the changes that may occur when individuals from different cultures come into contact with the like-minded community of the receiving state. Sometimes the dominant culture of the receiving community suppresses the cultural practices of the migrants as well as their cultural independence.

The covid-19 pandemic and recent conflicts in Afghanistan and Ukraine on the other hand changed the entire scenario of migrants and refugees worldwide. The new worldwide crisis reflects its impact on cultural practices. Several songs, theatres, and folklores have been written in favour of the migrants. These songs have been used in the protest march by the refugees, human rights activists, media activists, students and several other people. Several new words and terms have emerged apart from the usual terms that they used to define the struggle to retain their own identity. These terms should be one important tool to understand the worldwide crisis of migrants and refugees.

Keywords: Cultural Migration, Dominant Culture, Migrant Culture, Cultural Oppression, Acculturation, Cultural Assimilation, Mixed Culture.

Keywords related to environment and climate change induced migration by Debashree Chakraborty

Climate change and climate change induced migration are two important aspects that inform our live in the contemporary. Over the past few years, it has been observed that a lot of human migration has occurred due to reasons that could be intricately traced to climate change events or environmental concerns. This leads one to ponder on the pervasiveness of such an event. However, it should also be noted that there are certain terms related to the idea of "environment" which are sometimes used interchangeably for "climate change" as well. Given the fact that contemporary climate change is an event facilitated by human beings, it is important to draw the distinctions between climate change induced migration and environmental migration.

While environmental migration could occur due to reasons like deforestation, lack of potable drinking water as a result of industrial pollution etc., climate migration, on the other hand, is solely a result of anthropogenic climate change. So keywords focusing on the distinctions between environmental factors and climate change would help in forging a better understanding of these phenomena. A few suggested keywords are – environmental migration, climate change induced migration, environmental migrants, climate migrants, climate apocalypse, climate collapse, climate mobility, climate justice, climate uncertainty, climate variables.

Migration or displacement induced as a result of climate change invokes a sense of loss. Such a sense of loss leads to questions of health and wellbeing. Glenn A Albrecht has dealt extensively with the kind of impact that climate change has on the psychosomatic, particularly on people experience displacement and has come up with certain terms that focus on the impact of climate change and displacement on human health. Under the broad category of climate grief, the following keywords could be read to have a holistic understanding of how climate change, as a phenomenon, has deep rooted implications on human beings in terms of mental health a well. These are – dis-ease, psychoterratic, rehome, rewild, solastalgia, terrafurie, terratrauma etc.

South Asian Migration in Literature note by Samata Biswas

Marked by colonialism and violent partitions, the South Asian region is one of the largest migrants and refugee producing areas in the world. The region's shared history of often violent migration in the British empire has resulted in south Asian diaspora in most corners of the world, with attendant reflection in literature and culture, development sin languages, musical form, food practices etc. South Asian migration literature therefore cannot be defined and denoted within a couple of sentences, from cassette songs popular among Gulf migrant from Kerala to the songs of left-behind wives of migrant workers in Bihar, the landscape of south Asian literature and cultural productions is myriad and complex. Even if we consider only very well-known names and the genre of the novel, from Booker prize winner Kiran Desai whose protagonist travels from a conflict torn North Bengal to North America as an undocumented worker (*The Inheritance of Loss*) to the other Booker prize winner Michael Ondaatje whose characters try to recover from the aftermath of violent colonial excursions and the second world war—memories of which make tenderness impossible (The English Patient), from the immigrant Bangladeshi woman who overcomes her claustrophobic existence by becoming economically independent (Monica Ali's *Brick Lane*) to Khaled Hosseini's exploration of friendship across war torn Afghanistan (*Kite Runner*), South Asian fiction tackles issues of forced migration, internal displacement, diaspora, homelessness, rootlessness and identity head on. This brief account does not even begin to talk about the proliferation of new and old fiction as a result of the partition of British India, the numerous songs, poems, memoirs, short stories, cinema and other art work that it continues to generate.

Another trajectory of this literature can be mapped in the former colonies, from the Caribbean to South Africa. Less popular than the Nobel prize winning *A House for Mr. Biswas*, V. S. Naipaul's *The Middle Passage* (an obvious reminder of the journeys of the enslaved people across the Atlantic) is a travelogue which ties together the histories of the enslaved and the indentured. Literature, especially in the many vernaculars, need not merely be about trans-border migration.

The instances mentioned above, owe much of their popularity and renown to the language they were written in English. The field of literatures in the vernaculars that deal with migration(s), is even more varied and rich.

Statelessness brief note with key words by K. M. Parivelan

In a world of nation-states, it is ironical to see 'stateless' people. It is case of glaring ommissions or contradiction at international level, where several millions are denied citizenship or nationality. South Asia is riddled with such challenges of statelessness and exclusions. Statelessness is a profound violation of human rights of an individual and remains to be one of the most pressing humanitarian issues of the twenty-first century. Article 15 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights clearly states that (1) *"Everyone has the right to a nationality"* and that (2) *"No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality[1]."* Despite this guarantee, people in all parts of the world face the prospect of living without the nationality/ citizenship and its foreseen rights hence, lacks the security and protection under the state that usually citizens takes for granted.

South Asia is riddled with culture, history, colonial experience, migration, state succession, citizenship, birth registration, etc. with root causes of statelessness. Stateless people are amongst the most vulnerable in the world, often denied enjoyment of rights such as equality before the law, the right to work, education or healthcare[2].

Article 1 of the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons (1954 Convention) defines a 'stateless person' as someone *"not considered as a national by any state under the operation of its law."* Statelessness arises in a variety of contexts. It occurs in migratory situations, for example, among some expatriates who lose or are deprived of their nationality without having acquired the nationality of a country of habitual residence. Most stateless persons, however, have never crossed borders and find themselves in their "own country". Their predicament exists *in situ*, that is in the country of their long-term residence, in many cases the country of their birth. For these individuals, statelessness is often the result of problems in the framing and implementation of nationality laws.

Despite advances in international law regarding the protection of stateless persons, India has been reluctant to incorporate them into national legislation. Thus, it is not

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[1] According to Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948

[2] Handbook on Protection of Stateless Persons, UNHCR, Geneva, 2014

surprising that there is dearth in data regarding statelessness in India. Some of the causes of statelessness are as follows:

(i) Decolonisation led to partition of British India and creation of two sovereign States: India and Pakistan. This caused a large scale mass migration of approximately 12 to 14 million people who became displaced on either sides.

(ii) One such specific category as part of partition refugees are still called as 'West Pakistan Refugees' in Jammu and Kashmir, they are getting settled now post State reoganisation and revoking of articles 370 and 35A of Indian Constitution.

(iii) Decolonisation also affected the legal status of many Indian origin people in Sri Lanka during colonial times as plantation workers, and were rendered stateless upon Independence in 1948.

(iv) Amongst them a section of them are in India named as Uphill Country Tamils among the Sri Lankan Refugees in India since 1983.

(v) Currently in the State of Assam, several lakhs of people are beig rendered as stateless or 'D' voters (euphemism for doubtful voters) through the new census registration scrutiny. In addition the recent National Register Census has announced nearly 40 lakh people do not qualify to be citizens, in other words they are stateless people.

(vi) The Bhils are category of nomadic migratory tribal people trapped between borders of India and Pakistan

(vii) Chakmas and Hejongs also face discrimination and are being in the state of statelessness

(viii) People living in Indo- Bangladesh borders prior to Land Boundary Agreement (LBA) signed in 2015, lived in statelessness conditions and continue to face difficulties even after getting citizenship on papers.

(ix) Added to this is a potential new category of NRC excluded people in Assam state.

Key words: *Statelessness, citizenship, exclusion, rights, migration, partition, National Register of citizens (NRC), borders, nation-state, et al.*

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