Refugee, Memory and the State:
A Review of Research in Refugees Studies

By

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At the close of this century it is becoming increasingly clear that in the last hundred years we have witnessed the global displacement of people on an unprecedented scale, and concerns about migration have become inescapable. Migration and forced migration as global processes are today seen as an irreversible process and as Hardt and Negri (2000) in their influential book point out that reshaping social relations everywhere, immigration on this scale today reveals both the hostility of the multitude to the system of national borders and its tenacious desire for the cosmopolitan freedom. They argue forcefully for abolition of all immigration controls because for them this is a demand that opens up the possibility of rejuvenating the politically stagnant core of global capitalism. Like migration, 'refugee problem' today is being addressed from various disciplinary positions and gaining importance on the list of academic concerns, not simply because of its humanitarian significance but also because of its impact on peace, security and stability. In India refugee problem has been revisited in recent times through reviewing partition from various perspectives and vantage points. Though partition has been reassessed in historical terms but in this review we have focused on the impact it made on people, practices, and institutions, a major concern of sociological inquiry. In fact partition constitutes a field of transformation and a discourse that shaped the postcolonial citizenship and politics. It is in this context that the figure of partition refugee became a site through which a range of question about nationality, security, right, and citizenship were negotiated in India. The refugee-citizen's liminality both interrogates the governmentality question in a transitional state like India, as we shall see in this review. Georgio Agamben (1998: 134) has argued that the refugee 'is nothing less

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than a limit concept that radically calls into question the fundamental categories of the nation-state, from the birth-nation to man-citizen link'. As such Agamben suggests, the refugee 'makes it possible to clear the way for a long over-due renewal of categories in the service of a politics in which bare life is no longer separated and excepted, either in the state order or in the figure of human rights (*ibid.*). The discourse of partition, as we shall encounter in this review, reveal the official rhetoric as well as what Foucault has called 'subjugated knowledges' about identity, minor citizenship, gender and relationship in postcolonial India. How the minor subjects - a partially denationalised political subjects - negotiate the processes of governmentality, which, Foucault has shown, participate in the subjection of people, as refugees and minor-citizens, in the postcolonial state. Time span for this review is a decade, 2001 to 2010, but in many cases we have gone back in time to consider important and related research published in the nineties.

Partition and Refugee Experience

Creation of new nation states through partition of India in 1947 was a seminal event of the twentieth century, which led to unprecedented upheavals, massive shifts in population and unexpected transformation of the socio-political landscape. Partition constituted deconstituted and reconstituted communities. It caused new nations to be born. Partition has evoked critical thinking on the processes such as fragmentation, mechanism of inclusion and exclusion, identity based violence and impulses behind displacement. For a long time the issues emanating from this violent transition and its product, the refugees, did not receive the attention from social scientists that they should have deserved. In recent times, however, it is possible to notice a surge of interest in partition and its consequences, not so much from a historiographic perspective, but more from sociological, narratological, and anthropological perspectives. The new interest and the rising concern has created many battle grounds, as the refugees are being viewed from the perspectives of development and underdevelopment, conflict and war, colonial/ post colonial policies and geographies, the rise of nation-state as reality and cold war and post-cold war politics. Within the genre of scholarship the emphasis was initially on imperial politics, which later shifted to the politics of the Congress and the Muslim League. More recently, partition studies have turned their attention to the consequences, rather than the causes, and followed a bottom-up approach. In the official discourse of partition, the state claims to represent the entire Indian populace, therefore to speak of partition is an acknowledgement of the presence of groups, events or experience that have remained at the margins of the nation (Kumar 1999). The revisionist studies of partition have probed the question of how the common people, especially women and marginal groups experienced partition, and thus, attention has now shifted to the refugee experience and narration of violence. It has been argued that partition remains an active category in the life of India, especially in the life

of the east. Here it remains not as a leaf in archives, but as renewal, as currency, as presence. The new studies engage with the subjects such as memory, cultural reflexivity, dynamics and biography of new territory, and the problematic nature of the idea of the 'nation' in the context of continuous trans-border population migration (Samaddar 1997). For Samaddar partition is not really a reconstruction of the past, it is a recording of a continuous present. In that sense partition is an enduring fact, living in the present as much as in the past. Partition gave rise to new social arrangements, new consciousness, and new subjectivities (Pandey 2001:50). The importance of partition for modern times has been called to attention by many scholars. It is argued that even if the event goes back to the forties, it has remained a reality, a deep metaphor for violence, fear, domination, separation, 'a metaphor, in one word, for the past , one that goes on making the present inadequate' (Samaddar 2001:22). Samaddar considers partition an event of the past and a sign of the present time; he writes: 'Partition lives on in post-colonial time to such an extent that we should truly prefer the phrase "partitioned times" to the more common "post-colonial times"' (Samaddar 2003:21). In revisiting partition, the focus has now shifted to popular experiences of violence and displacement, on the impact of partition on the lives of common people and the variety of meaning attached to this upheaval. New appraisals of partition have raised questions about how a people with a long-standing history of shared living could respond to symbols of discord and disunity, why did a society with rich plural heritage could become a site of such intense conflict and violence (Hasan 2000; Alavi 2002).

In the context of partitioned independence of India, a more critical scrutiny of the prevalent sociological theory of migration is attempted. It has been argued that in South Asia, the conceptual neatness of 'push' and 'pull' factors do not always apply, people often migrate due to violence, strife, lack of confidence in nation's stability, or for that matter because of the kinship or community network or established tradition of seasonal migration (Samaddar 1997a). These migrants and refugees, remain marginalised, a marker of the 'minority niche' in the host country, and continue to be defined through exclusionary practices. However, as Samaddar (*ibid.*) points out, these peripheralised, marginalised migrants are also required to define the 'core' and 'periphery' of the system, its legality and illegality, and thus are essential forms of the investment of national boundaries with power. The recent studies have pointed out that while in the past, little had been written on the refugees, even these accounts followed the stereotypical narrative of 'victimhood'. That refugees were victims, who had to involuntarily leave their homes, compelled by forces over which they had no control during and after partition, cannot be denied. But in the process such a narrative missed out the question of agency. As Bose (2000a:1) notes: 'The fixed identity that the narrative of victimhood seeks to impose upon the refugees is in fact unstable, because in their multiple efforts to come to terms with the new situations, the agentive subjects have to negotiate a very complex

arena of possible give-and-take and choices'. A new set of essays attempted to address these issues and attempted to respond to questions like, even though refugees were the end result of complex articulation of colonial and national power, whether it was always necessary to position them as victims, incapable of answering back (Bose 2000). Writers of partition histories have had to contend with the impediment of borders, compounded by the complexities of sub-continental politics. Ghosh (2007, 2008) seeks to widen partition studies by detailing how partition persists in the lives of its migrants and minorities in an increasingly transnational context. Ghosh presents an account of Biharis negotiating, getting to, and claiming, Pakistan in the two Muhajir formations, one in the east and other in the west. In a complementary analysis, she shows how partition is a major reference point, both in installing and resisting Hindutva in the post-eighties. Her research is anchored around three main themes: a retrieval of the voices of partition's north Indian Muhajirs with a focus on the Bihari experience; the persistence of partition in the South Asian Diasporas; and the reconfiguration of subcontinent beyond partition that is in process. From a Marxist perspective partition has been viewed as a crime of British imperialism with the claim that within the confines of capitalism and feudalism there cannot be any solution. Only workers of both countries can offer a solution (Khan 2007). Others have viewed partition as move to protect the strategic and economic interests of the British and as manipulation of religion and politics by the powers that be (Sarila 2005). Partition history has been combined with ethnography to produce a narrative of the national and the local, the administrative and the personal, the everyday and epochal, in an attempt to examine the nation-making process from below (Zaminder 2007). Recent population research on migration during partition based on district level census data estimate total migratory inflows of 14.5 million and outflows of 17.9 million, implying 3.4 million 'missing people' (Bharadwaj *et al.* 2008). The study also uncovers a substantial degree of regional variability. Flows were much larger along the western border, higher in cities and areas close to the border, and dependent heavily on the size of the 'minority' religious group. The migratory flows also display a 'relative replacement effect' with in-migrants moving in to places that saw greater outmigration.

The study of partition has moved from the 'centre' to the 'margins', as it were, to look at the communal disturbances, or the politics of the Congress/Muslim League at small provinces, by focussing on marginal groups, like the tribes, the Sikhs, and the subjects of Princely states (Settar and Gupta 2002). New researches have explored marginal voices and focussed on the popular culture of the period and tried to reconstruct a microscopic view of the fall-out of partition (Settar and Gupta 2002a). Kaur (2006a), for instance, has done an interesting study on the 'differing' means and modes of transport used by the Hindu and Sikh migrants from West Punjab to East Punjab during partition displacement (see also Dey 2009). A variety of transport modes were used like foot columns, bullock carts, trucks, private cars, trains and aircraft – of which the fastest and the safest

means were seldom available to underprivileged section. Kaur (*ibid.*) points out that these differing modes are a pointer to the divergent class experience of partition displacement, and the way collective memories of partition were formed. The experience of partition has indefinitely prolonged conflicts, while borders were drawn around mixed population, they lead to ethnic cleansing and inciting of ancient hatreds (Deschaumes and Iveokvic 2003; Kumar 2003). For Kumar in the post-colonial world since ethnic partition can no longer be viewed as the price of independence (as an exit strategy), partition fails to provide international institutions with an exit strategy. On the one hand there is a view that existing histories of partition are statist, elitist and unworthy of the authentic, felt 'experience' of the division (Pandey 1994: 188-221), others have critiqued this position and argued positively about the role of nationalist forces in developing the crisis of the colonial state, resulting in partition and independence (Mahajan 2000). Still others have blamed the political leadership on both sides for failing to see the writing on the wall and have concluded that the tragic holocaust could have been avoided with foresight and planning (Godbole 2006). From a different perspective some have argued that earlier works of partition have portrayed it as a tragic and unintended consequence of decolonisation or viewed it as subordinated to larger dramas surrounding the advent of independence but it should be viewed in its own terms (Tan and Kudaisya 2000). They argue that it was not a single event, but a trigger of processes which have left a deep imprint in the region. Instead of looking at *causes* of partition, this research attempts to broaden the horizon by looking at its *effects*, constructed around two key motifs: the dislocations and disruptions, and long-term impact of partition on peoples, places and institutions. In relation to both the history of partition and largely post-1950 history of global migration in the case of India, Daiya (2008: 16) has argued that the construction of categories and communities like 'citizenship', 'refugee', and 'nation' needs to be reconsidered in a less regional and more transnational context

The case of partition of Bengal points out one important aspect of modern nation-state formation that has been little recognised in the literature of nationalism, namely, the subterranean presence of religion as a cultural-demographic element in the formation of hegemonic national ideologies (Chatterjee 1997). From the governmentality perspective, 'population' as the target of governmental action, is defined not in terms of religion, and religion does not sit well with various classificatory categories of population. Yet, the paradox remains that, like numerous instances of nationalism, religious identity in Bengal provided a major element in the cultural construction of the national identity. Discursive and ideological differences between relief and rehabilitation measures offered to refugees in Bengal have been discussed by Chatterji (2001, 2007). Chatterji observes how the specialised claims of the refugees broadened into a series of demands made on the grounds of citizen rights, thus continuing to the growth of left consciousness in Bengal (see also Dasgupta 2002). In a sense

demands over rights by marginal groups such as the refugees, eventually effected changes in political and public life in Bengal. The resettlement of refugees, as the studies show, took various forms in the post-partition era. The greatest hardship was probably faced by those who were uprooted again and transported to places outside Bengal. Refugee studies show that a satisfactory outcome of rehabilitation, resettlement, and adjustment process necessitates a certain complimentarity between the refugees on the one hand, and host society on the other. A large number of refugees, who were deported to Dandakaranya and Andamans, had to face a hostile, inhospitable, alien environment, and in Dandakaranya, especially, desertion became a regular feature. The government also utilised the manpower and cheap labour of the refugees to develop a backward area (Gupta 1999; Ghosh 2000; Das 2003). In other words, in such cases the refugee rehabilitation was not simply governed by the principles of relief, support, or assistance but by the development logic of the state. Similar sentiments were expressed in Andamans as well. For instance, it was suggested that the labour for clearing the forests in Andamans be recruited from among the refugees (Basu Ray Chaudhury 2000). In deporting the refugees to states other than West Bengal, the government attempted to present the problem as a 'national' problem, but the refugees had to pay a heavy price for this. In contrast, in a less hostile environment, the refugees collectively showed enough self-reliance, initiatives, and enthusiasm to found a market without any external support (Sinha 2000). In a sense this market represented past solidarity, an effort to preserve an identity, which was based on the shared experience of struggle, collectivity, and personhood, and also a space where complex set of meanings and symbols operated. Recent studies of lives at refugee camps bring out experiences, memories and processes of inclusion and exclusion. Two research studies of one of the largest transit camps in West Bengal known as Cooper's Camp examine in different ways, the practices of the state and analyze the production of identities and subjectivities of the refugees and the ways they are institutionalized and differentiated from other subjects (Basu Ray Chaudhury 2009; Dey 2009, 2009a). Dey (2009) investigates the nature of transmission of collective memory, and the configuration of 'us' and 'them' in state discourse and in refugee camps. As these studies observe, the category of 'refugee' emerges as the battlefield where specific identities and subjectivities are contested and forged in effective forces of everyday life. The two studies on Cooper's Camp can be labeled as micro-histories, but the strategy of recovering refugee experience in this fashion has been deliberately employed, not simply to restore subjectivity but also to recapture the agency of the refugee constructed through memory and other forms of self-representation. Refugee camps in India have always been the sites of contestation in the creation of the state and both the studies illustrate this in various ways. The two studies show quite effectively how the state 'produces' its subjects, and more importantly, how the state creates the figure of 'citizen' and 'non-citizen'. In North Bengal, it is reported, that the influx of immigrants after

partition has burdened the economy of the region and intensified the competition between the locals and the immigrants. The geographical location of the region also makes it a strategic entry point from the different neighboring countries of Nepal, Bhutan and Bangladesh. The government's failure to check illegal migration, as a result, has created internal refugees who fear losing their identity and they have pushed this region into turmoil (Hazarika 2002).

Shifting of refugees to Dandakaranya in the post-partition years never worked properly as future studies show. Mallick (1999) points out that back in East Pakistan the near total departure of the Hindu upper-caste landed elite and urban middle classes meant that communal agitation had to be directed against the Hindu untouchables who remained. Later refugees therefore came from the lower classes, who lacked the means to survive on their own and became dependent on government relief. Lacking the family and caste connections of the previous middle class refugees, they had to accept the government policy of dispersing them to other states, on the claim that there was insufficient vacant land in West Bengal. By doing so the Congress government effectively broke up the Namasudra movement and scattered the caste in refugee colonies outside Bengal, thereby enhancing the dominance of the traditional Bengali tricaste elite. However, the land the untouchable refugees were settled on in other states was forests in the traditional territory of tribal people, who resented this occupation. The conditions in many resettlement camps were deplorable, and grievances led to resentment and movement, which began at Mana group of camps in Dandakaranya and the refugees decided to launch a national movement for resettlement at Sunderbans area of West Bengal. Refugees began to settle at Marichjhapi Island in Sunderbans, after the Left Front government came to power in West Bengal, but the left government at state was not disposed to tolerate such settlement, saying it violated the Forests Acts. It is debatable whether the CPI(M) placed primacy on ecology or merely feared this might be a precedent for an unmanageable refugee influx with the consequent loss of political support. When persuasion failed to make the refugees abandon their settlement, the West Bengal government started on January 26, 1979, an economic blockade of the settlement with thirty police launches. The community was tear-gassed, huts were razed, and fisheries and tube wells were destroyed, in an attempt to deprive the refugees of food and water. Many died of starvation, exhaustion and many were killed by police firing (See also Jalais 2005).

Researches on organisations that emerged to address the issues of rehabilitation, property rights, eviction, and better infrastructural facilities and so on, show that they were particularly constrained by the lack of proper gendered perspective (Deb 2000).These organisations and movements for decent living standards for the refugees, did not even consider that women could have special needs and requirements. In fact, one of the most unprotected segment of the refugees were the women, who were widowed or separated from the family, and who, consequently, were placed in a

culturally anomalous position and particularly vulnerable to exploitation. In such cases only voluntary organisations came to their help and taught the deprived women new skills and self-reliance (Gangopadhyay 2000). In a study of women's role in recreating the space in resettlement colonies Weber (2003) reports that refugee women did not really move into public life, but rather the domestic world expanded to include their participation in political, community and economic affairs. Feminist researchers have argued that the state is the main organiser of power relations of gender. Studying forced migration from their standpoint, therefore, helps in uncovering the patriarchal character of the state in appropriating the civil and political rights of migrant women. Menon and Bhasin (1998) and Butalia's (1998) work on thousands of women who were abducted and then 'recovered' by the respective state authorities during the post-partition era illustrates the paternalism of the Indian state. It took the role of protector and provider and insisted on determining where women and their children belong. For women who were dislocated, destitute, widowed, and collectively described in policy terms as 'unattached', the state stepped in as the surrogate *pater familias*, and once again inherited the mantle of the protector. Chakravartty (2005) brings to attention a new social category 'refugee women' that owed its birth to the traumatic events of partition. These women were forced into new public and political roles and identities; they also came to occupy spaces that had been denied to them in more secure and sheltered time. In the process Chakravartty also explores the inner domain of women's work and expertise in terms of shifts in dialect, food habits, and purity pollution taboos, in caste practices and living patterns. Basu Ray Chaudhury (2009a) presents a narrative of women of rural Bengal around Hoogly Immambarah about the communal onslaughts in 1950, their journey to East Bengal, their unfortunate experiences there, and their return.

It has been increasingly realised that forced migrations in Punjab and Bengal have their own region specific distinctions and demand different sociologies (Butalia 1998; Menon and Bhasin 1998; Bagchi and Dasgupta 2003; Bagchi *et al.* 2009). In fact the intensity and depth of violence in the West was much more than the East, but here mayhem and displacement remained confined to first three years. In Bengal on the contrary refugee flow remains a continuous affair and has become an inescapable part of its reality (Samaddar 1997a). For such reasons in recent times Bengal's partition has received a more careful attention from researchers, who have focused on the politics of partition and changing structure of power in this region. Chatterji (2007) surveys in great detail the social, economic, and political consequences of partition in Bengal, and brings partition forward to 1967, when the Congress in Bengal suffered a decline. Her study investigates the politics of the refugees and rise of the communist movement, the state of the Muslims and the impact of the movement of the refugees. She explains how in Bengal the spoils of partition were squandered away by the Congress in Bengal, the political class that was the architect of partition. It was this class which eventually became the biggest loser, as it was squeezed out by

restricting economic and administrative opportunities on the one hand, and by a migrant population on the other. While Chatterji (*ibid.*) blames the leaders of the *bhdralok* for profoundly misjudging matters because they were actually inexperienced as a political class and partition eventually frustrated the plans and purposes of the very class who demanded it. In an earlier study Chatterji (1995) provides a re-evaluation of the events of partition in a Muslim-majority province Bengal, tracing the rise of Hindu communalism, and portrays a picture of a stratified and fragmented society moving away from the mainstream of Indian nationalism, and increasingly preoccupied with more parochial concerns. Saberwal (2008) on the other hand bring up the issue of religion and hardening of community consciousness both among the Hindus and the Muslims, that he claims pushed these two communities apart and prepared the ground for communal politics and partition. These skirmishes had several dimensions: symbolic (like desecrating the places of worship), societal (conversions) and physical (including violence against women) (Nag 2001; Chakrabarty 2004; Panigrahi 2004; Saberwal 2008).

The growth of communal consciousness has been explained by the socio-economic and political processes at the grassroots, at the same time researchers have looked at the institutional politics to gauge the importance of religion and the cultural distinctiveness in the so-called separatist politics. Others have critiqued the narratives of nationalisms, inclusive or exclusivist, as these narratives have permeated people's cultural and political consciousness at the expense of tolerance, dignity, and equality in everyday lives (Datta 2005). A contemporary account of partition in the form of letters and reports supplements the sociology of history, as it brings out a disinterested observer's assessment of politics, economic and social issues, and regional problems during a critical decade (Talbot 2007). Motif of partition continues to reverberate in the contemporary politics of India in subtle, ambivalent, and subterranean ways (Raman 2007). Raman investigates a Muslim area in Benaras, stigmatised as 'mini-Pakistan', and focuses on the demonisation of this minority area, stereotyping, and vilification of an entire community. Partition motifs continue to be enacted through struggles over religious space, creating fresh memory of the theory that the Muslims and Hindus constitute separate communities that cannot be accommodated in one nation, as a study of making a Durga temple in old Bhopal shows (Rao 2007). Another study observes that over two million Sindhis (who formed a religious minority in Sindh, now in Pakistan) migrated to India during partition. One of the consequences of this rupture has been the community's move towards hardened identities, who less than hundred years ago practised a very non-textualised form of Hinduism (Kothari 2004). New studies look at the actual incidents of violence and the role of power struggle in altering the form and manifestation of violence in Punjab during partition. An analysis of the changing nature of violence in the period 1937-43 shows the way the traditional forms of violence gave way to genocidal massacres (Hansen 2002). A disaggregated account of the

politics of partition shows how Dalits opted for new forms of activism and struggle. When the prospect of partition created new and volatile situation, rather than choose between the two poles of identity, Hindu or Muslim – Dalits strived for a separate, independent identity (Rawat 2001).

One of the consequences of partition was the creation of borders and the border separating India, East Pakistan and Burma in recent studies has been depicted as the backbone of a new borderland, and described as 'Bengal borderland' (van Schendel 2005). In the post-colonial south Asia new borders have determined the legality and illegality of migration, and the borders play a crucial role in determining the practices of statecraft. Samaddar (1999) in his account of borders, migrants and illegal migrants takes up the significance of the border as a central issue in migration, in fact, in his analysis the border and human flow combine into a single account, and he points out that flow of population across Indo-Bangladesh border has been prompted by contiguity, social affinities, economic imperatives and will to survive. In such circumstances, 'nation' and 'border' are marginalised in the minds of people, who don't even hesitate to find 'illegal' ways to surmount such obstacles in the path of their survival. For refugee studies Samaddar (2000) makes a plea for a return to the subject of forced migration – the subject who moves, who makes the movement. Though Bengal borderland is increasingly being policed, patrolled, fenced, and land-mined, from the very beginning it has been the scene of large transnational flow of labour migrants and refugees, of trade in many goods. The study of borderland has opened up the possibilities of rethinking wider social theory, especially with regard to how we conceptualise social space. The idea of 'borderland' destabilises the fixed identities of 'societies', 'cultures' and economies, identities that correspond to fixed territories. Modern social science is associated with the development of terrtorialisation of state power and consequently social imagination was constituted by the 'iron grip of the nation state' (*ibid.:* 5). A 'borderland' is viewed as a zone or region, within which lies an international border, and a 'borderland society' is a social and cultural system straddling the system. As van Schendel (2005) points out, that earlier studies of border areas were much influenced by the territorialist epistemology and methodology of social science, and viewed these zones *not* as units in their own rights, but primarily as the margins of states and societies. The earlier approach focused more on how states deal with borderlands than how borderlands deal with the states. A reconfigured study of borderland which views both sides of an international border as a zone provides a corrective to state-centric approach, and force us to view migration and refugee flow form completely different perspective. Banerjee (2010) in a related study of borderland shows how the conditions of migrant women are marked by human trafficking and mobile diseases and how bordered existence destabilises the rigid constructs. Some have questioned the rhetoric of 'borderless world' and asked whether trans-border economic cooperation could overcome tension arising out of the existing borders (Murayama 2006). Murayama argues that inspite of India's policy shift to

improve relationship with smaller neighbours and the promotion of sub-regional cooperation in the 1990s, border dispute remained as thorny as before because sub-regional cooperation in Eastern India is characterised not by deconstruction of borders as political discourses, but by the absence of serious thinking about borders and borderlands, not to speak of the people who have to live with border realities.

In recent times interdisciplinary studies have addressed new issues and focused on the refugee experience from the perspectives of anthropological and cultural studies and have opened up a broad range of interpretative strategies to bear on the problem of how one might best understand the conflicting experiences of refugees. One important theme that has emerged is the notion of 'trust' as a sentiment, a concept, and an experience (Daniel and Knudsen 1995). It is claimed that from its inception the experience of refugee puts trust on trial. The refugee mistrusts and is mistrusted. The process of breakdown of trust may range from a breach of faith between communities to that of interpersonal mistrust. What is conveyed by 'trust' here is not a conscious state of awareness, something akin to belief, but something opposite to this, what Pierre Bourdieu calls *habitus* or what Martin Heideggar called *being-in-the-world* (Bose 1999). By becoming a refugee a person experiences a radical disjunction between his or her familiar *way-of-being* in the world and a new reality that not only subverts that way-of-being but also forces one to see the world differently. Such crises of being are invariably accompanied by the erosion of trust. Others have, however, questioned the centrality of the concept 'trust' in refugee studies and disputed the founding assumption by its advocates that trust is basic to being human. They have questioned the unqualified acceptance of 'trust' as a methodological tool in the analysis of human social relations, particularly as it relates to the study of refugees. They ask 'Can we assume that the inability of an individual to trust others is necessarily pathological or leads to pathological consequences?' (Voutira and Harell-Bond 1995). The critiques point out in the fashion of Durkheim that bond that holds together human societies is not trust *per se* but trust in a system of normative social relations, values, hierarchies, roles, obligations and so on.

Critiques have commented that for a comprehensive account of partition refugees, it is helpful to take a more serious look at provinces other than Punjab and Bengal, which were also directly involved, like, for instance, Bihar, Assam, Sindh or Rajasthan (Rahman and van Schendel 2003). Barring a few studies like on Bihar by Ghosh (2007, 2008) or Assam by Baruah (1999), the picture remains incomplete and partial. Though there is large and varied literature on refugees who came to Eastern India, but still there are few accounts of the reverse flow of refugees into East Pakistan. The accounts of refugees are mainly focused on the state of West Bengal; only exceptions are studies of East Pakistani refugees in Bihar (Sinha-Kerkhoff 2006, Sinha-Kerkhoff and Bal 2007), East Pakistani refugees in Andaman Islands (Basu Ray Chaudhury 2000), or Mayaram's (1996) study of Mewat region in north-east Rajasthan, investigating the making, experience, and

representation of violence that accompanied partition. Critiques have, therefore, point out that to remove such inadequacies, more research should be focused on refugees who migrated from East Pakistan to parts of India like, greater Assam, Tripura, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and the Andaman Islands (Rahman and van Schendel 2003).

Memory, Tale, Representation

Memory, recollection, remembrance, reminiscence have all been creatively employed by social scientists to uncover the unknown depths of the trauma of separation, displacement and accompanied violence. Memories or non-disciplinary accounts of the past are accounts which are fluid, contingent and in process. Studies of memoirs, autobiographies, reminiscences, show that both the fictional and non-fictional testimonials of partition have, to a large extent, shared a sense of omissions and suppressions perpetrated by official discourses. Partition refers to much more than processes of forced separation and creation of distinct political entities. It also forms the basis for long-term practices such as identity, work and memory, and the very bases on which different societies are organised; it has far-reaching sociological implications for communal patterns, generational dynamics, and individual lives (Jassal and Ben-Ari, 2006, 2007). Accounts of lived experience share the experience of loss, exile, rite of passage, they also express the same sense of marginalisation and silencing, a shared sense of divide between the well-publicized judgement of historians and their own, lived experience. As Bose (1997) points out, memory and history have long but ambiguous relationship. History reduces memory to the status of a source, a means to history's ends. However, today the relationship between memory and history appears to have taken a dramatic turn in the reversal of fortune. Bose writes: 'When history ceases to be an art of memory it looses its meaning and purpose, though reconciled with memory history can draw on the wellspring of imagination, discover 'lost worlds' by a reconnection with the memories of groups excluded from the consciousness of historians. Then perhaps we will realise that memory begins where history ends' (Bose 1997:85). Memory is seen as an important key to consciousness and represents experience in temporal order, experience as a succession. For many of those displaced and uprooted during partition, the events of the trauma survive not so much through history as we know it, as through the memories of the past. As nation state creates and preserves its 'collective memory', the displaced and dislocated create a memory of their own that survive in many different forms. Reassessment and re-evaluation of refugee experience reveal some important aspects that were rarely addressed before. These studies illustrate that experience of refugees is profoundly cultural and the disjunction that refugees face between their familiar way-of-being and a new reality compels them to resolve the problem of meaning and interpret their experience continuously. Anthropologists and sociologists working with refugees have

found that it is erroneous to view them simply as 'economic beings' because refugee's self-identity is often anchored in one's past (Sinha 2000; Ray 2000). The recording of historical memory conveys both what has been lost in the past and as it is present in contemporary life, as Kumar (1999:204) comments: the 'past-in-the-presentness of partition as a history that is not done with or refuses to be past'. These studies address the question of how past persists in the present or how the present includes a partiality, a lack of fullness, resulting from the underflow of the past. What has come before, often in another place, another country, confirms the self as multiple, split, layered and built up of sedimented acts and revised memories. What is re-membered serves to constitute a body of knowledge and experience that inflicts the politics of location and subjectivity. Memories, literary texts bear witness to the feeling of bewilderment, loss, dislocation, violence, insecurities and aspirations that motivated the migrants for new homelands. Questions are asked about how we remember partition and how these memories impact our functioning and our institutions (Kaul 2001). In the context of partition, others have observed that a relationship of complimentarity exists between problems internal to history and the desires of memory, so much so that together they form integral parts of a single operation, the historiographical operation (Samaddar 2006).

A variety of writings on memory, recollections, nostalgia, and the ways in which events of dislocation are remembered (or forgotten) have recorded and documented the violence, trauma, conflicts, displacement, eviction, rehabilitation, and destructiveness of riots. These writings have been utilised by social scientists to probe into the depths of partition events, in an effort to trace 'the political economy of memory', which not only opened up new areas of enquiry, posed new questions, but also provided a critique of the procedures of social science enquiry and writings. A major focus of such analyses has been the violence that marked partition of India, and the attendant question of history and memory, the ways in which violent events are remembered in order to ensure the unity of collective subject-community or nation. The inquiry moves into the area of nationalist myth-making on the question of violence and examine how local forms of sociality are constituted, and reconstituted by the experience and representation of violent events (Pandey 2001). Partition violence has been explored in terms of the ambiguous relationship between the collective and the individual, between genre and individual emplotment of stories. Conceptually, the trauma and its memory are probed in terms of 'voice' and the 'everyday'. In other words attempt is not to describe the moments of horror but describe what happens to the subject and world when the memory of such events is folded into ongoing relationship (Das 2006). Memories describe operation recovery of women and children who had been abducted due to riots and chaos of partition (Patel 2006), memories have tried to link the past and the present, bridging generations to understand how dislocation and loss of home impacts on families and how it interweaves with history to create the present we inhabit (Panjabi 2005).

Memory aspires to put different bits of truth together, it has been claimed that remembering indicates a will to truth; it is an admission of the negativity of silence, an act that works through selection, framing, self-reflection, distancing (Jain 2007). In the growing literature on memories of partition, as it is possible to find narratives of violence, contradictory assertions of 'secular' and 'communal' elements, certain sets of stereotypes (Bandyopadhayay 1997), it is also quite common to see accounts of nostalgia, the invocation of the idyllic and harmonious past, eventually ruptured and disintegrated (Chakrabarty 1996; Bose 1997). It is an absence that is inevitably present in the narratives of partition and displacement, the idyllic is invoked to put in sharp relief, the traumatic. It has been contended that there are serious difficulties in representing violence, 'the theatre of cruelty is life itself' (Derrida 1978), and that violence is basically unnarratable. However, efforts have been made through creative accounts to bring together history, attitude, and experience, to talk about violence and probe the silence of human mind (Jain 2007). As Bose (1997) points out, endemic to displacement, an associated term currently used is 'deterritorialisation' for the displacement of identities, persons, and meanings. But memories are constituents of identities, persons and meanings, and as such while the body can be deterritorialised, identities are difficult to dislodge. Bose (*ibid.*) argues that through memory the displaced have sought to preserve their separateness and distinctiveness, memory has even conferred to them a certain degree of social autonomy. Memory divulges the complex process of adjustment and transition the refugees have gone through and highlight the process of rehabilitation as an organic one, which goes beyond mere dependence on official patronage and favour (Ray 2000; Sinha 2000). The process of rehabilitation as these memories show is not an uncomplicated linear process, but a practice in which identities are produced, consumed, regulated, sustained, and invalidated.

Establishment of new nation-states after partition create different memory regimes, a cognitive map with mental borders based on principles of inclusion and exclusion. For such reasons instead of 'How did it happen?', the question has now shifted to 'How was it experienced?' and a key concept in much of this is that of 'borders of mind', that is, the animosities carried in individual minds that affect day-to-day behaviour and experience far away from any international border that a partition as such might create. Partition not only created physical boundaries but also produced cognitive maps with mental borders that is based on the principle of inclusion and exclusion. While marginal population like lower caste Hindus in Bangladesh, do not accept the borders of mind, it is argued that they are definitely internalised by the populace in general (Sinha-Kerkhoff and Bal 2007). It has been further reasoned that there should be new mental borders that can play effective role in de-partitioning the societies (Sinha-Kekhoff 2006). Academic interest in viewing 'partition from below', rather than deliberating on the high politics of the endgame of the empire, has made interested scholars return to oral sources, literature, memories in an

attempt to unlock the human emotion and new sociological dimension of the 1947 upheavals. There is also a growing interest in the study of localities, a single city for instance, for new sociological insights, mainly because such research can provide a compact socio-cultural milieu. New researches have explored and analysed the aftermath of partition with respect to cities as Calcutta, Lahore, Dhaka and Delhi (Tan and Kudaisya 2000). A new study has confined itself to the city of Amritsar, the epicentre of violence during partition, and examines the process of migration and refugee resettlement through twenty-five oral interviews (Talbot and Tatla 2005). A survey of a predominantly Muslim neighbourhood of Delhi asks how memories of historical events like partition riots influence the construction of contemporary urban localities (Kirmani 2008). The oral testimonies provide new insights into the experience of uprooting, violence, and differing ordeal of elite and subaltern classes. Post-partition refugees live in memory and memory lives in them. Some have argued that memories of bitter past and refugeehood over time become concretised, structured and rooted, making healing process difficult. In this context explorations are made about the possibility of memory playing a trust-building role, a reconciliation promoting role, in short, a healing role (Mehdi 2003).

A gendered reading of partition through the memories of women, considered to be marginal in the master narrative, attempts to comprehend an alternative history and experiential space. Memories of partition of women have often delved in the interconnections between violence, memory, and cognition of events of women's lives during partition. These narratives provide illustrations of ignored voices, which are absent in statist discourse. The meta-narrative of the state, it is argued, has imposed a coercive silence on women's experience, and thus reduced their accounts to a minority discourse that is denied a public forum (Khan 2006). Minority discourse, like oral stories by women is viewed as a disturbing influence on the grand narrtivisation. It also interacts through subversive ways with the 'influential' discourse and produces a more complex and realistic narrative. Orality, as a form of articulation of memory, has been marginalised for long because of the post-colonial nations' obsession with the colonial version of collecting and articulating a national history. However, contemporary scholars have claimed that orality demonstrates the complexities of memory that cannot be captured in written accounts an these collective voices need to be tapped in order to create new, hybridised forms of national autobiography (Pandey 1994). Since orality can include voices which are 'hidden from history', it is able to construct a more democratic portrayal social and political events. Memory and its narrative are circumscribed within two major emotional boundaries, the sentiment of nostalgia and the sense of trauma, and a traumatised memory has a narrative structure which works on a principle opposite to that of any historical narrative. The erratic and disjointed memory confronts the near metanarrative of the state (Chakrabarty 1996). Memory and orality have been characterised as non-linear, anarchical narrative compared to linear, hierarchical, vertical in

structure, segmented and unbending discourse of the state (Khan 2006). Women's narratives coming from the 'doubly marginalised' section of the society, cut across boundaries imposed by the state and such accounts break the homogeneity of state discourses by bringing in women's memory, experiences, recollections (Butalia 1998, 2006; Menon and Bhasin 1998; Khan 2006; Basu Ray Chaudhury 2006).

The challenging gap between the 'truth' of the state and the lived reality of the displaced have been taken up by women researchers by dealing primarily with the personal experiences of those who survived trauma of partition violence (Butalia 1998; Menon and Bhasin 1998). Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin (1998) filled-in part of the gendered narrative of displacement and dispossession around thematic clusters of violence, abduction, recovery, widowhood, women's rehabilitation, rebuilding and belonging. Urvashi Butalia retrieved the stories of 'smaller, often invisible players: ordinary people, women, children, scheduled castes' and underlined the need to look at how people remember partition (Butalia 1998). The violence created 'new subjects and subject positions' and it were felt that the moment of violence required greater attention than had been forthcoming from Indian social scientists (Pandey 2001, 2001a). These authors have contextualised the individual narratives and while Menon and Bhasin (1998) give a gendered reading of partition through memories of women, Butalia (1998) focuses on the marginalised, that is, on partition memories of women, children, and lower castes. A different perspective on partition women notes that women's lives in Punjab, regulated by strictly set patriarchal norms saw unexpected and almost drastic changes as partition set in (Dutta 2006). Dutta observes that while it is true that women were ubiquitous victims of partition, in many ways the chaos and temporality of the post-partition period allowed several of them to redefine themselves anew. She argues that these memories offer insights into how histories are made and how an alternative reading of the master narrative can provide a different perspective to re-write history. In a different collection of memories Menon (2004) points out that by demolishing the opposition between the personal and the political, by demonstrating that in women's experience, the personal is political, this historiography has validated the importance of the experiential dimension in analytical endeavour. These narratives describe the ordinary, the dailiness of women's lives, in contrast to master narratives that dwell on the momentous and extraordinary. Marginal voices of women, it is claimed, restore the spaces where the ordinary, the routine is restored. They provide history from 'bellow', having an 'underside' to official history (Bande 2007). Memories of women, including the Muslim voices from the other side of the border, in the form of interviews, life stories, autobiographies recount from different perspectives changing communal relations, protests, carnage and the tragic rupture of partition, they also describe women's displacement and their struggle to build their lives from the scratch (Bagchi and Dasgupta 2003; Bagchi et al. 2009; Kazim 2005). While violence perpetrated by men against women's bodies has received

much attention, Daiya (2008) focuses on the cultural representation of violence suffered by male bodies in public sphere and attempts to show masculinity along with feminity became sites of violence for symbolising nationality and communality in the period.

Memory can be juxtaposed with creative literature in Partition narratives as both together articulate the totality of experience by combining the imaginative and autobiographical modes of expression. Public sphere cultural texts like literature and film – an archive which is a part of the public memory of partition, and that constitutes a discourse of what Foucault has called 'counter memory' to the hegemonic public sphere. Individual memory needs to be complemented by literature and film as an archive of memory in the public sphere – a public, collective, and non-statist memory. Use has been made of literature as an alternate archive of partition that has articulated the 'little' narratives against the grand, the unofficial histories against the official, the peripheral against the central. The carving-out of territory as a state and the ensuing displacement, migration, uprooting of minorities, the riots and the violence, all find representation in the fictions of partition. They describe micro-processes of trauma and travail and represent a wide range of experiences of ordinary people and their everyday reality as many collections of stories on partition show (Bhalla 1994; Cowasjee and Duggal 1995; Hasan 1997; Sengupta 2003; Fraser 2006). During the last few years renewed attention has been given to what is called Partition literature. These works of fiction, poetry, and memoir describe and express events of division and separation by juxtaposing subjective memory with collective memory (Stewart and Kumar 2007). Logic of reading and interpreting literature is more or less similar to the narratives of memory we have discussed earlier (Asasuddin 2002; Chakravarty 2002; Kumar 2002; Mukhopadhyay 2002). Realities of the displacement and trauma, thus, have been explored through oral narratives, memoirs, interviews, reminiscences, and fictional retellings of the event and its aftermath. These narratives explore the conflict of loyalties, the fragility of relationships, and the division between home and nation, they also reveal the erasure of individual concerns as political ideology play havoc with inherited values, they reflect upon the gap between dreams and realities (Chatterjee 2007). Stories depict the responses of ordinary people caught in a tragic turning point in history. The narratives often represent the past, the events in history through memory of their characters. Stories about partition highlight the function of memory as well as representation (Chand 2006; Chakrabarty 2007). Trauma as a literary piece transfers the anxiety to the reader, thus widening the sphere of the traumatic experience. As Jain (2007:321) writes: 'Several partition narratives try to capture and portray this state of trauma – a mental state which reflects on the self-in-the–world because it represents a phase when the self is *not* in the world or of the world. But each narrative works differently. Some work through amnesia, others through frenzy, still others through a slow realisation of the loss and a deep sense of sorrow and some through presenting the hallucinatory state of the mind through non-realistic

modes'. Zaman (2000), for instance, questions the disturbing silences in partition fiction in the sub-continent. Important question underlying such explorations points to the plausibility for the social scientists to try and capture a volatile event like partition with its fluidity, elusiveness, and self-contradictory responses it evoked. This becomes a significant question for anyone seeking to understand the event not in its supposed objectivity, but in terms of various subjectivities that constituted it (Chandra 2007). Literature is a representation of one kind or the other – realistic or surrealistic - and violence disrupts this act of representation by the fact of being unrepresentable (Jain 2007:3).

Along with literature the focus has also been expanded to an area of inquiry that explores the impact of partition on performative genres and capacity of these genres to narrate and translate partition event into languages of memory. An interesting aspect of this enquiry is that it raises question about the politics of forgetting and just about remembering past events through a performative tradition (Nijhawan 2007). Multiple forms in which a single event, partition is perceived in the popular mind in the Bhojpuri region, and how these remembrances are reflected in their cultural performances, like *nach* drama, folksongs and proverbs has also been explored (Tiwari 2002). Malik (2002) examines how the painter Satish Gujtal expressed the theme of partition, being himself a victim of partition. Politics of representation through an analysis of Bengali plays on partition, another performative genre, reveals how Benagali *bhadralok*, with disintegration threatening every aspect of their life, searched for an anchor and looked back to a more impressive past. Partition, in this context, could only be evoked as an aberration, a mark of loss and failure (Chattopadhyay 2002). In analysing a different genre, Ritwik Ghatak's film, Chatterjee (2002) shows how the moments of past enhance our understanding of the present in his films. Though partition never figures directly in Ghatak's films, its recurrent presence forms a riveting memory image of a cataclysmic event that had far reaching consequences. Combining literary and cinematic texts in a study of partition, gender, and national culture, Daiya (2008) explores the relation between culture and violence in the modern world, examining contemporary ethnic and gendered violence. By investigating texts of different genres she highlights the cultural and political negotiations of postcolonial migration, nationality, and violence in transnational public sphere. She observes that Ghatak's film directly address partition and its effects: forced migration, familial separation, abduction, and sexual violence against women, displaced urban and rural refugees and their economic and socio-cultural hardships. They play, according to Daiya (*ibid.*) a complex dialectic, sometimes critical and sometime nation-building role in promoting the rhetoric of secular citizenship.

A recurrent theme that has appeared especially in the writings of Edward Said is the argument about refugees' right to return and the theme of exile (Said 2002). Exile, with its suggestion of distance, separation, displacement, and detachment at first appears to be a life without

'connections', however, that is not Said's approach to the life of an exile. A secular intellectual's liminal crossing or 'voyage in' to metropolis – the crossing of a liminal space presupposing not complete detachment but rather a mingling of 'half-involvements and half-detachments'. For Said, exile means a critical distance from all cultural identities, restless opposition to all orthodoxies – both those of the colonizer and of the colonised. Understood in this way, Said believes, exile, though painful, is also a *morally valuable condition*. The fact is that for most exiles the difficulty consists not simply in being forced to live away from home, but rather, in living with many reminders that her home is not in fact so far away and that the normal traffic of everyday contemporary life keeps her in constant but tantalizing and unfulfilled touch with old place. The exile, therefore, exists in a median state, neither completely at one with the new setting nor fully disenchanted of the old, beset with half-involvements and half-detachments (see Lal 2005).

Bose (2000) observes that in straight-jacket social science narratives crucial moments of socio-cultural transformations cannot be glimpsed. Such are the limitations of the standard discourse of social science. These moments can only be glimpsed at obliquely and at the margins, for their visibility requires an immersion into interrupted memory and displaced emotion. History of this transition can be exposed through subtleties of fragmented memory, understanding of culture as exchange, anecdotal experience and a conscious literary device. Thus the use of fragment but overlapping memories here is not simply an aesthetic or arbitrary choice, experiential fragmentation is the form in which this history has been stored and thus dictates the form of the reconstruction. The essays on partition memory attempt to achieve this reconstruction in a reflexive move. For there can be no reflexivity unless one passes through an historical re-enactment of memory and perceptual difference. In fusing the social with cultural and autobiographical, the essays on memory focus on a past, and trace it through those experiential fragments, deferred emotions, and lost objects that were not part of public culture of modernity, yet integral to the tangible force of its historical passage. This mixture of memory, fragments, autobiography, narrative style also refracts ready-made montage that organise the figure of the insider-outsider, which is the very embodiment of what the refugee has become.

The State, Refugee Welfare and Governmentality

Large scale population flow has been a constant feature of South Asia, and the region has suffered the ravages of population movements over the last six decades. These population flows include refugees, economic migrants, stateless persons and internally displaced persons (IDPs). South Asia has 14 percent of the world's refugee population and is the principal source and host of refugees. The causes behind the displacement are political instability, armed conflict, ethnic and communal strife, lack of

resources and other socio-political reasons. Yet, none of the countries in South Asia have signed any major convention or treaty at the international level in regard to refugees; nor have they any national legislation or regional framework to deal with these issues. In the case of refugee studies many have taken South Asia as a unit of analysis because of the shared history of South Asian nations and their contiguous boundaries (Kanitkar 2000; Chari *et al* 2003; Ghosh 2004). The factors responsible for the refugee influx in the region are considered to be the breakdown of colonial rule leading to adverse repercussions, the problems of nation and state building resulting in certain political, ethnic, religious, and economic conditions that forced people to migrate (Chari *et al* 2003). In other words population movements can be broadly categorized into those arising as a result of conflict and violence, those arising because of natural calamities, ecological degradation, and developmental processes leading to displacement, such as the construction of large dams, industrial facilities, infrastructural installations, and services. By definition refugees are persons seeking shelter from danger or trouble from religious or political persecution, for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion, from war, natural calamities and so on, in a foreign country.

Refugees are a distinct class of persons in international law. States have signed international conventions that govern issues of protection and assistance to be afforded to refugees, though India is not a signatory to any convention or treaty on refugees as mentioned earlier. Who is classified as a refugee by a state or by an international agency mandated to carry out international conventions makes a difference. What causes people to flee a country and to seek designation as refugees may be different from international migration caused primarily by natural disaster or for economic or social purposes? The genesis of refugee production can be located in the structure and operation of the 'nation-state' system and its inherent conflict and instabilities. Refugee production is often explained by the problem of states trying to reconcile and manage the contradiction of the norm of a single constitutive nation in each state with the reality of multinational states. Thus the refugee regime stems from states' failure to act as states are suppose to act. In the post cold-war situation the goals of immigration and refugee policies have changed in the developed nations in the West. The demand now is for policies to control, manage, or stop migration and refugee flows (Ghosh 2000).

In the post-partition scenario the government in West Bengal has been described as hesitant, vacillating, and faltering in taking effective measures for the care and welfare of the refugees. The measures that were taken by the government have been categorised mainly in terms of relief and rehabilitation, which, in effect, meant: enumerating and classifying refugees, providing them with doles and assistance and preparing them for future rehabilitation. A general overview of the policies shows that the government was guided solely by economic considerations (Das 2000). In his essay on governmentality Michel Foucault (1991) has argued about the emergence of

'population' as a key element in technique of governance. Population is a descriptive category and does not carry a normative burden; populations are identifiable, classifiable, and describable by empirical criteria like enumerations, censuses and surveys. One can view influx of refugees as a governmentality problem, where the refugee 'population' was sought to be defined in a particular manner and made target of governmental action. Classification of population then provides the government manipulable instruments for reaching the target of its policies. The state, thus, views refugees in terms of numbers, shelter, food, health, and hygiene. An instance of postcolonial governmentality can also be found in the act of appropriation of migrants' property by the state apparatus which cited the urgent demands of refugee rehabilitation to justify the appropriation (Das 2000). The acts of the country of origin in a way constitute an injury to both the refugees and other host states. Refugees, thus represent a failure of the state system, a 'problem' to be solved. The existence of refugees and their moral claim to protection puts pressure on the basic infrastructure of the state, and Indian state faced the same dilemma again in the next phase of exodus during the 70s, when the political turmoil in East Pakistan sparked off an unprecedented flow of refugees in West Bengal. India's past experience in dealing with the refugees had helped the government to build up an effective machinery to deal with the refugees (Bandopadhyay 2000).

Refugees' encounter with the state brings out into play two kinds of rights, one emerging out of the idea of nationhood and citizenship, the other emanating from the social security concerns of the state. The birth of social security concerns is linked to the intricacies of governmental policies and technology of government employed for the care of refugee population, a population having an ambivalent relationship with the state (Samaddar 2003). This, in fact, is the governmentality problem of the state. It is in this context that some have argued for the state to make a transition from a regime of charity to a regime of rights for the care and protection of the refugees (Chatterji 2001; Chimni 2003; Hans 2003; Suryanarayan 2003). In the East, the tackling of the refugee problem was constrained by the ideological commitment to the state and nation building; it was also limited by the different understanding of the refugee population (Das 2003). Menon (2003) charts out the emergence of social security commitment in a newly independent nation by linking rehabilitation with reconstruction, treating refugees as human resource. At the ground level providing social security means creating an apparatus that can deliver essential commodities like food and water, medical relief and health care, education, means of employment, repatriation assistance and so on (Kharat 2003; Saha 2003; Bose 2004). However in India government treated refugees on a case-by-case basis, and there was an absence of a clear-cut policy or refugee care regime in the government. The response of the Indian state towards the refugees and their needs has been a matter of calculation, discrimination, and discretion. The sphere of care, as a result, got segmented, became strategically ambiguous and there was an inherent paradox in the relation between care and power.

India received the largest number of refugees since her decolonisation but treated them more as strategic pawns in the geopolitical games (Basu Ray Chaudhury 2003).

Gender is an integral part of the refugee experience, and the reality of women's conflict-driven migration has been examined to explore the changes in status, identities, and power relations among women and men as they move from conflict situation at home, to migrant camps, to the post-conflict phase when they return home (Behera 2006). Conflict generated migration represents a crisis point and always carry the possibility of changing the social relations of men and women. Recent enquiries have attempted to understand how status, identities, and power relations among men and women change from conflict situations at home to the migrant camps, and when they return home (Butalia 2006; Basu Ray Chaudhury 2004, 2006; Manchanda 2004, 2006; Sircar 2006). What have been problematised in these studies are the ambiguities of categorisation of 'migrants', 'refugees', 'dislocated', the blurred line of distinction between life-threatening and livelihood-threatening situations that women are subjected to, puzzling and shifting notions of 'home' for migrants, who seek naturalisation and citizenship of the 'host' country. These migrants seek a home, a sense of belonging and a nation, but where is their home? Where they are now or where they have spent much of their lives? For many migrants, Butalia (2006) points out that they may be located in a new state, their home remains elsewhere, the land they left behind. Feminist researchers generally view with suspicion the idea of home as a private space, guarded by patriarchal norms that remain outside the purview of the state. Basu Ray Chaudhury (2006) uses the term 'refugee' to refer to a person who has been uprooted from her *desh* – a term that has been translated as 'foundational homeland'. Home is thus associated intimately with the idea of belonging – belonging to a place and a community. Refugees and migrants, it is asserted, are never quite at home in the countries and places that the live in since the sense of belonging and home is missing. As Behera (2006:36) mentions that home also represents a way of life, a way of being, a culture, and a way of thinking. In this sense a home has been considered as a positive locus of identity for women and simply as the first site of oppression for women. Bhalla (2005, 2007) offers an analysis of the idea of 'home' in fictional texts about partition, and suggests that the idea of 'home' in partition narratives is linked with Gandhi's notion of swaraj, freedom, and ethicality.

However, a broader understanding of home is possible and perhaps necessary, when one is concerned with individuals' continuous movement through different homes as a result of migration. Such an understanding of home is also appropriate for coming to terms with movement inherent in social life, for charting the intrinsic migrancy of identity. Increasingly, individuals are seen as moving between homes, past to present, or as moving between multiple present homes. In fact, the thesis of transnationalism implies a radical change in the conceptualisation of

relations between movement and home: not only can one be at home in movement, but that movement can be one's very home. As Berger (1984) pointed out long ago, for a world of travellers – labour migrants, exiles and refugees – home comes to be located in styles of dress and address, in myths and memories, in stories carried around in one's head, in the ritual of a regularly used personal name. People are more at home nowadays, in short, in 'words, jokes, opinions, gestures, actions, even the way one wears a hat' (Berger 1984:64).

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