REFUGEE WATCH

A South Asian Journal on Forced Migration

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Mahanirban Calcutta Research Group

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CONTENTS

Editorial: On Gender, Development, and Resistance in South Asia

By

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Editorial

Questions related to political subjectivity and intersections of gender, class, race, and ethnicity lie at the heart of a broad spectrum of contemporary struggles in the Global South where women's participation and political engagement has increased and intensified in a wide variety of social movements. In theoretical debate, this has been referred to as 'feminisation of resistance'[1], corresponding to the fact that 'it is the bodies and labour of women and girls that constitute the heart of these struggles'[2]. Women's political engagement has intensified in a wide range of movements. While some fight against neoliberal development projects that displace thousands of poor people, others contest new forms of colonialism that have resulted in conflicts over land, forests, and water, causing forced displacement and forced migration on a massive scale. Extreme poverty intensified by neoliberal policies implemented in many developing countries has inspired women to become increasingly active in social movements – thus, not only poverty but also resistance has become feminised[3].

Many movements work broadly for causes of social justice, equality, and dignity. Some concentrate particularly on women's rights, and struggle against patriarchal capitalist coloniality, sexism, and heteronormativity. Importantly, as postcolonial feminists have proposed, subjects who simultaneously face multiple oppressions are in a position to re-imagine emancipatory politics, to produce and embody difference, and to create and experiment with new subjectivities. These struggles are transforming the nature, meaning, and subjects of resistance.[4] Viewed from this perspective, the feminisation of resistance raises many important epistemological and political questions. As argued by Sara Motta, there is 'an urgent need to recognize a

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feminization of resistance that is historically distinctive and challenges masculinist conceptualizations of political and social transformation'[5].

The increasing engagement of women in social movements, together with the growing role of feminist movements in the Global South is not a development celebrated by all. In many countries it has been met by a sharp increase in government intimidation and state surveillance. Social movements and activists are disciplined and punished, marginalised, and represented as being against progress and development[6]. Direct violence is used regularly for silencing female activists – they are raped, kidnapped, tortured, and abused[7]. In other words, the dark side of feminisation of resistance manifests itself in giving birth to new technologies of rule, governance, and domination over feminised and raced bodies. However, political subjects are *always* governed, also when they are resisting[8]. There exists a complex interplay between governance and resistance, which means that besides different forms of resistance, attention needs to be paid to governance of resistance, as well as governance *through* resistance. In this context, it also must be noted that even violent struggles are not simply destructive for social movements as they simultaneously involve 'the construction of new subjectivities and social relationships that reinvent a development beyond developmentalism and against neoliberalism'[9].

Due to ever-growing scepticism towards mainstream politics controlled by political and economic elites, the idea of autonomous resistance has gained ground among social movements, including women's rights and feminist movements. Feminism itself has become an increasingly popular philosophy as well as an everyday practice in a broad range of social movements in the Global South. However, as pointed out by postcolonial feminists, many of the most popular feminist concepts and approaches originally derive from the continental European tradition, and are often closely connected to Western political theory. The fact that it is difficult to study postcolonial feminism-s with Western theories and concepts can perhaps explain why feminist movements in postcolonial contexts have not attracted nearly as much attention in Western academia as their continental European or American counterparts. Another challenge is that while there exists a great variety of practices in movements across the world that can be interpreted as feminist, these movements would not always characterise themselves as feminist.

Indeed, in many countries in the Global South it is not an easy or simple choice to declare or define a movement explicitly as feminist, owing to the high amount of state violence and intimidation that feminist activists face in many countries, as already stated above. Moreover, as is the case in mainstream discourses and media representations in the Global North, also in the Global South feminism is often attached with many negative connotations, which can be, at least partly, due to the fact that feminism as a concept is misunderstood as 'a result of the power of the patriarchy'[10].

The premises of Western feminism have been also critiqued from within social movements in the Global South. Some of these critiques are not familiar to Western audiences. For many Nordic feminists, for example, it

might come as a surprise that outside the Western world feminism can be regarded as a Eurocentric, highly theoretical, and even elitist philosophy or ideology which serves 'the narrow self-interest of Western feminism'[11]. One of the main criticisms is that mainstream feminism often reflects white, bourgeois, liberal frames of feminism while not taking questions of race and class sufficiently into account[12]. This kind of critique has surfaced most prominently among black, queer, and working class feminists who have reproached mainstream feminism quite straightforwardly for the 'silencing and sidelining of their experiences, voices and strategies'[13].

Another source of criticism is that considerable sections of the feminist movement, both inside and outside academia, have become professionalised and institutionalised and are therefore 'easily assimilated within the logic of late capitalism'[14], which has raised questions of how well they can actually support struggles against neoliberalism by poor and marginalised women[15]. Postcolonial feminists have strongly emphasised the importance of bringing forward 'the voices of those excluded and delegitimized by the universalizing and violent power dynamics of patriarchal colonial capitalism' in a way that does not 'ignore differences in context or fall into the trap of hegemonic feminist representations of "poor" Third World women that overlook the concrete agency and experience of those subjects'[16].

This relates to a third aspect that has been debated extensively: the complex relationship between the researcher and the 'researched' that takes various forms in local and global networks of power. Scholars from the Global North are usually welcomed to study and take part in the struggles of social movements in the Global South, but as postcolonial feminists have pointed out, hegemonic Western approaches are problematic in many ways. In recent years, especially the high level of abstraction in feminist theorising – which is considered to have increased to a large extent due to the growing popularity of poststructuralist theory – has been denoted as a major shortcoming. According to the critics, the deconstruction of the subject of 'woman' has resulted in 'the detachment of academic endeavour from women's political practice' and is depriving 'feminist politics of the categorical basis for its own normative claims'[17].

These critiques are highly important as the position of a Western researcher, whether a feminist scholar or not, is made possible because of the existing structural differences, and sometimes the efforts to 'help' women and/or their movements in the Global South by studying them can unintentionally end up strengthening those hierarchies[18]. Too often, still, research segregates 'the knowledge from people, from its contexts and local histories'[19], resulting in many difficulties when trying to translate resistance in the Global South 'into Western-based understanding and theory, or using situated theories to understand practice'[20]. Mainly, these criticisms concern Western political science but also feminist scholarship to some extent. During the past few decades demands to 'decolonise' feminism have gained more ground[21]. In an important sense, the imperative to decolonise feminism bears close resemblance to demands by Western feminists to 'queer' political science and IR theory[22]. Many inspiring proposals for decolonising academic research

have been made, and many methods and strategies have been experimented with[23]. Importantly, researchers are encouraged to 'unlearn' their academic privileges, that is, to deconstruct and relinquish part of what they have been taught about their roles as social scientists in the Western academy, in order to widen their understanding of movement-relevant research, learn from the practices of social movements, and most importantly, transform their practices[24].

What in particular needs to be challenged is the presumption that the researcher has 'the epistemic privilege of producing theoretical knowledge' as this view fails to recognise that also movements can create theoretical knowledge[25]. Indeed, as Motta argues, theory is not produced individually but collectively, 'via reflection, within political struggle, based upon the lived experiences and struggles of excluded and marginalized communities', and consequently, research that is done 'in solidarity with such struggles for social justice' must build on 'a horizontal relationship of mutual "learning" in which abstraction is based upon closeness as opposed to distance from lived experience and in which epistemology becomes a prefigurative practice of everyday life'[26]. Similarly, many women activists in the Global South have emphasised the importance of ideological solidarity between different groups of women when engaging in a broader project of constructing post colonial forms of feminist solidarity[27]. This kind of feminist thinking is based on the idea that through the creation of 'a plurality of forms of knowing' and transnational as well as local alliances and solidarities it is possible to destabilise 'epistemological politics of patriarchal capitalist coloniality' and to challenge 'the dramatic effects of neoliberal capitalism on the lives of women'[28].

In an attempt to explore and address these, and related themes and problematiques from different perspectives across multiple disciplines, an international 'Gender, Resistance, Development' workshop was organised at the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Lapland, in Rovaniemi, Finland, on 7–8 June 2015. As a part of my Academy of Finland funded research project 'Governance, Resistance and Neoliberal Development: Struggles against Development-Induced Displacement and Forced Evictions in South Asia', the workshop was sponsored by UniPID, the Finnish University Partnership for International Development, together with the host institution, the University of Lapland.

The workshop attracted participants from 11 different countries including India, Bangladesh, México, Canada, and the UK. We also had the pleasure of hosting four participants from Nepal who were able to travel to Rovaniemi despite the tragic earthquake that had taken place less than two months earlier, on 25 April 2015, killing over 8,000 and injuring 21,000 people. During the course of the workshop, Som Prasad Niroula (Nepal Institute of Peace), Neetu Pokharel (Alliance for Social Dialogue), Roopshree Joshi (World Education Inc.), and Bhagavati Adhikari (Nepal Mahila Ekata Samaj) reflected on the enormous human suffering caused by the earthquake and its manifold social, political, and cultural impacts on their home country. The Nepali delegation also provided other participants with information on

how to help the earthquake victims through their representative organisations.[29]

The workshop started with a lecture by the invited keynote speaker, Paula Banerjee, Professor at the University of Calcutta, and Director of the Mahanirban Calcutta Research Group. Banerjee, who has published extensively on gender related issues[30] during her long career, gave an impressive keynote lecture on women's resistance to development induced forced migration in South Asia[31]. Banerjee explained how the dominant development paradigm has resulted in massive displacement in many developing countries. She explicated how the social, cultural, and environmental costs of large development projects such as damns, mines, and hydro power plants, have been born unevenly by poor and marginalised groups, peasants, indigenous people, and other minorities, while the benefits of development have been placed in the hands of the middle class and elites. She also described women's resistance against damns, mines, and other development projects in great detail.

After the powerful and inspiring keynote lecture, 21 papers were presented during the course of the intensive two-day workshop. In this special issue, I have the honour to introduce four papers that were presented at the workshop. Here, it is worth mentioning that an excellent summary of all workshop presentations written by Sreya Sen has been published in the previous number of the *Refugee Watch*[32].

This special issue starts with Anitta Kynsilehto's article 'Resisting Borders: Mobilities, Gender, and Bodies: Crossing the Mediterranean' that touches upon a very topical and relevant subject, refugees in Europe. At the time of writing this, Europe is facing a refugee situation that seems to be shaking its very foundations, especially where the European Union is concerned. During late 2015 and early 2016 the continent has witnessed newcomers in unprecedented numbers: over 1,1 million refugees have crossed the European borders. In her paper, Kynsilehto offers an intimate, personal, and contemplative auto-ethnographic account of her own experiences as a researcher working with refugees in Greece and Turkey. In examining mobile circuits around the Mediterranean basin, Kynsilehto describes how 'people on the move', that is, people who are characterised as undocumented migrants or asylum-seekers in the official discourse, challenge not only the administrative and legal categorisations but also the taken-for-granted assumptions within fluid migrant communities and among solidarity advocates. By narrating her own encounters with refugees, Kynsilehto brings forward complexities and tensions in the relationship between a privileged researcher and the people she engages with.

In her article, Doctoral Candidate Sreya Sen analyses the impact of river erosion induced displacement on the lives of women in Khulna, Bangladesh and in the district of Malda in West Bengal, India. Her article explores also the way in which the displaced women have emerged as forces of resistance, and how women as active agents are reconstructing their lives. Sen points out that while the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement emphasise the protection of women, many important issues,

such as women's agency and their empowerment, are not addressed. Thus, the unconventional roles played by women as well as the positive, productive developments which may occur in the context of displacement remain unrecognised. Sen recommends state authorities and non-governmental organisations to take on a gender sensitive approach for rehabilitation of displaced women, thereby assisting the empowerment of these already resilient, and resistant, women.

In her article 'This Place is not Ours: Stateless Women and the Right to Citizenship in Nepal', Roopshree Joshi analyses the stories of three women who lack citizenship in order to shed light to problems and challenges of stateless and marginalised women, and to provide visibility to their experiences which remain absent from the public sphere. In an effort to enrich and diversify the ongoing and vivid public debate on citizenship in Nepal, Joshi discusses broadly different perspectives and conceptualisations of citizenship, statelessness, and identity, while also critically reflecting on the current Citizenship Act of Nepal and practices related to it.

In his article, Nanda Kishor presents three comparative case studies of development induced urban displacement in the metropolitan city of Hyderabad. In exploring the cases through a diachronic perspective, reflecting on the situation before, during, and after displacement, Kishor illustrates the vast variety of challenges that displaced people face especially in resettlement colonies, such as cultural alienation, dispossession of land resources, human rights abuses, and lowering of living standards. He describes in great detail how displacement causes vulnerability while discussing also gender specific impacts. His analysis demonstrates the complexity and interconnectedness of many problems caused by development and consequent displacement. Kishor concludes by critically reflecting on the state's development agenda, and importantly, by offering some policy remarks in an effort to sensitise the government in its engagement with displaced, vulnerable people.

I want to thank warmly all the contributors of this special issue, the participants of the 'Gender, Development, Resistance' workshop, the editorial board and the editor of the journal, Paula Banerjee, as well as Anwesha Sengupta, and others at the Calcutta Research Group for the wonderful opportunity to publish some of the papers presented at the Rovaniemi workshop. I want to extend my thanks to Baya Yantren and Tommaso Manfredini who have helped with the editing of this special issue at the Calcutta Research Group.

Regarded from within the current European context, there could not be more appropriate time for writing about, theorising, and analysing issues related to forced migration. At the same time, I must argue, what needs to be contested and transformed is the blatant Euro-centricism of the current refugee discourses. It would be good for us Europeans to realise that refugees are not only dying on the borders of our continent and the Mediterranean. Desperate people risk their lives also when crossing the seas in South Asia. In fact, in a recent report by the United Nations it was estimated that three times more refugees have died crossing the Bay of Bengal than the Mediterranean in 2015[33]. Moreover, it would be important to remember that the largest mass

migration in human history took place in South Asia when the British divided Bengal into West and East Bengal, forcing over 14 million people to migrate.

As Ranabir Samaddar argues, Europe has a 'postcolonial destiny' – its postcolonial past is intimately connected with its present, including the current refugee situation[34]. Our pasts and futures intertwined, it is my conviction that we European scholars can learn much from our South Asian colleagues as the area holds enormous amount of invaluable knowledge, experience, and expertise in issues related to forced migration and refugees. Let's share our knowledge and work together towards a better future, making it a common destiny.

Notes

[1] See e.g. Motta, Sara C. '"We Are the Ones We Have Been Waiting For': The Feminization of Resistance in Venezuela. *Latin American Perspectives*, 40.4 (2013), 35–54; Motta, Sara C., Christina Fominaya, Catherine Eschle, and Laurence Cox. 'Feminism, Women's Movements and Women in Movement', *Interface: a journal for and about social movements*, 3.2 (2011), 1–32.

[2] Mohanty, Chandra T. *Feminism Without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2003, 294.

[3] Motta, 'We Are the Ones We Have Been Waiting For', 36; see also Mohanty, Ranjita. 'Contesting Development, Reinventing Democracy: Grassroots Social Movements in India'. *Citizenship and Social Movements: Perspectives from the Global South*. Ed. L. Thompson and C. Tapscott. London: Zed Books, 2010, 239–259.

[4] Motta, 'We Are the Ones We Have Been Waiting For', 26, 36.

[5] Motta, 'We Are the Ones We Have Been Waiting For', 35.

[6] Roy, Arundhati. *Listening to Grasshoppers: Field Notes on Democracy*. New Delhi: Penguin Books India, 2009, xiv.

[7] See e.g. Baviskar, Amita. *In the Belly of the River: Tribal Conflicts over Development in the Narmada Valley*. 2nd edition. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2004 [1995]; Roy, *Listening to Grasshoppers*; Mohanty, ''Contesting Development, Reinventing Democracy', 242–243; Nilsen, Alf G. '"Not Suspended in Mid-Air": Critical Reflections on Subaltern Encounters with the Indian State'. *Social Movements in the Global South: Disposession, Development and Resistance in the Global South*. Eds. Sara C. Motta and A. G. Nilsen. Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2011, 104–127, 116; Mukherjee Suroopa, Eurig Scandrett, Tarunima Sen, and Dharmesh Shah. 'Generating Theory in the Bhopal Survivors' Movement'. *Social Movements in the Global South: Dispossession, Development and Resistance in the Global South*. Eds. Sara C. Motta and Alf G. Nilsen. Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2011, 150–177, 175; Roy, Dayabati. 'Contemporary Politics in West Bengal: the Discourse on Democracy'. *Contemporary Politics in West Bengal: Glimpses from the Left Front Regime*. Dayabati Roy and Partha Sarathi Banerjee. Kolkata: Purbalok, 2012, 39–65, 41.

[8] Odysseos, Louiza. 'Governing Dissent in the Central Kalahari Game Reserve: "Development", Govermentality, and Subjectification amongs Botswana's Bushmen', *Globalizations*, 8.4 (2011), 439–455.

[9] Motta, Sara C., and Alf G. Nilsen. 'Social Movements and/in the Postcolonial: Dispossession, Development and Resistance in the Global South'. *Social Movements in the Global South: Dispossession, Development and Resistance in the Global South*. Eds. Sara C. Motta and Alf G. Nilsen. Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2011, 1–31, 16.

[10] Motta et al., 'Feminism, Women's Movements and Women in Movement', 2.

11 Mohanty, *Feminism Without Borders*, 222–223.

12 Mohanty, *Feminism Without Borders,* 49–50; Motta, 'We Are the Ones We Have Been Waiting For', 37; Motta et al., 'Feminism, Women's Movements and Women in Movement', 2.

13 Motta et al., 'Feminism, Women's Movements and Women in Movement', 2; Collins, Patricia H. *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*. 2nd edition. New York: Routledge, 2000.

14 Mohanty, *Feminism Without Borders*, 244.

15 Mohanty, *Feminism Without Borders,* 248–250; Motta et al., 'Feminism, Women's Movements and Women in Movement', 2.

16 Motta, 'We Are the Ones We Have Been Waiting For', 37; see also Mohanty, *Feminism Without Borders*, 17, 200, 231–236; Mohanty, 'Contesting Development, Reinventing Democracy'; Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*. Eds. C. Nelson and L. Grossberg. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988, 271–316.

17 Motta et al., 'Feminism, Women's Movements and Women in Movement', 11–12; see also Mohanty, *Feminism Without Borders*, 6; Butler, Judith. 'Gender Trouble, Feminist Theory and Psycho-Analytic Discourse'. *Feminism/Postmodernism.* Ed. L. Nicholson. New York: Routledge, 1990, 324–340; Haraway, Donna. 'A Manifesto for Cyborgs', *Socialist Review*, 80 (1985), 65–108.

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20 Otto and Terhorst, 'Beyond Differences?', 216; Mukherjee et al.,'Generating Theory in the Bhopal Survivors' Movement', 150.

21 See e.g. Mohanty, *Feminism Without Borders*.

22 See e.g. Tickner, J. Ann. 'You Just Don't Understand: Troubled Engagements Between Feminists and IR Theorists', *International Studies Quarterly*, 41.4 (1997), 611–632; Tickner, J. Ann. 'Dealing with Difference: Problems and Possibilities for Dialogue in International Relations', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 39.3 (2011), 607–618; Enloe, Cynthia. 'Feminism'. *International Relations Theory for the Twenty-First Century: An Introduction.* Ed. M. Griffiths. London: Routledge, 2007; Sylvester, Christine. *Feminist Theory and International Relations in a Postmodern Era*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994; Sylvester, Christine. 'Whither the International at the End of IR', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 35.3 (2007), 551–573; Gruffydd-Jones, Branwen. *Decolonizing International Relations*. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2006.

23 See e.g Tuhiwai Smith, Linda. *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*. London: Zed Books, 1999.

24 Motta, Sara C. 'Notes Towards Prefigurative Epistemologies'. *Social Movements in the Global South: Dispossession, Development and Resistance in the Global South*. Eds. Sara C. Motta and Alf G. Nilsen. Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2011, 178–199.

25 Motta and Nilsen, 'Social Movements and/in the Postcolonial', 21–22.

26 Motta, 'Notes Towards Prefigurative Epistemologies', 194–196.

[27] For more, see e.g. Seppälä, Tiina. 'Feminizing Resistance, Decolonizing Solidarity: Contesting Neoliberal Development in the Global South', *Journal of Resistance Studies*, 1 (2016).

[28] Motta, 'We Are the Ones We Have Been Waiting For', 38.

[29] University of Lapland, 'Kansainvälinen seminaari sukupuolesta, kehityksestä ja vastarinnasta yliopistolla', Press release, 27 May 2015. Available at http://www.ulapland.fi/news/Kansainvalinen-seminaari-sukupuolesta,-kehityksesta-ja-vastarinnasta-yliopistolla/2247/97b2d451-4cf8-4144-a3cb-19fda953d7cb, last accessed 29 February 2016; University of Lapland, 'Teema: Jotta koulutie olisi tytölle turvallinen', News, 3 June 2015. Available at https://www.ulapland.fi/news/Teema-Jotta-koulutie-olisi-tytolle-turvallinen/gu3y14s0/d9423955-3542-492f-8f41-b0bfe18027a1 , last accessed 29 February 2016.

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[31] Nykänen, Tapio. 'Teema: Etelä-Aasian heimokansat pakosalla', University of Lapland, News, Interview of Paula Banerjee, 21 August 2016. Available at https://www.ulapland.fi/news/Teema-Etela-Aasian-heimokansat-pakosalla/ui4m1i13/6d55b882-92e6-4cb8-9957-88447e878c5c, last accessed 29 February 2016.

[32] Sen, Sreya. 'International Workshop on Gender, Development, Resistance', 7 to 8 June 2015, University of Lapland in Rovaniemi, Finland: A Report'', *Refugee Watch*, 45(2015), 86–91; see also Sen, Sreya, 'International Workshop on Gender, Development, Resistance at University of Lapland: A Report', *Refugee Watch Online*, 19 October 2015. Available at http://refugeewatchonline.blogspot.fi/2015/10/international-workshop-on-gender.html , last accessed 29 February 2016.

[33] UN News Centre, 'Bay of Bengal "three times more deadly" than Mediterranean for migrants and refugees – UN', 23 February 2016. Available at http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=53298#.VtGDJpyLSM8 , last accessed 29 February 2016.

[34] Acceptance speech by Professor Ranabir Samaddar, Distinguished Chair in Migration and Forced Migration, Calcutta Research Group, Kolkata, India. Available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LBoTaaULNvo , last accessed 28 February 2016.

Resisting Borders: Mobilities, Gender, and Bodies Crossing the Mediterranean

By

Anitta Kynsilehto [*]

Abstract: European policies attempting to regulate international mobilities, internally as well as in their external impact, push people around Europe and its 'neighbourhood' in search for a safe haven. This phenomenon is called transit migration and its routes run along different hubs, which sometimes become more permanent dwellings. Building on ethnographic insights gained with people on the move, characterised in official discourse as undocumented migrants or asylum-seekers, this paper examines mobile circuits around the Mediterranean basin. This analysis departs from the frame of smooth functioning of administrative power that seeks to contain individuals in the places assigned to them, and thus regulate and stop irregular forms of global mobilities. The paper highlights mobile persons' potential of disturbing this power, indeed resisting it in different ways. In so doing, they challenge not only the administrative and legal categorisations but also question taken-for-granted assumptions within fluid migrant communities and among solidarity advocates. The paper deploys an auto-ethnographic approach to critically engage the researcher's positionality, and to engage with the intersection of hostilities and hospitalities.

Keywords: Mobility, border control, solidarity, Europe, Mediterranean

Introduction

I begin to tap my notes in the midst of a very intense period in the field in Greece and Turkey. I do not know how to organise my words, even thoughts. I'm sitting in the cosy living room of my friend's family apartment in central Athens, in the company of friends. I'm waiting for a yet another interview with a refugee in a precarious administrative situation, to be preceded by a late night ad hoc meeting with civil society stakeholders, that

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I'm about to be called for. I feel like being in the middle of very hospitable human connections, with people who consider it their ethical duty to help others in need, regardless their gender, religion, nationality or administrative situation. This has overall been my impression again during this fieldwork period, this time in Greece and Turkey. Nonetheless, the surrounding political context as regards persons on the move, be it nationally in Greece, region-wide in Europe and the wider Mediterranean 'neighbourhood' or even across the globe, is difficult to describe in any other manner than referring to hostility. (Athens, October 2013)

During the week before the above moment in Athens, the deadly shipwreck of 3 October 2013 off the island of Lampedusa, Italy, where over three hundred fifty persons died, made headlines in the international press. Italy offered posthumous citizenship and coverage for funerals to those who had passed away in the incident – yet leaving the survivors to deal with the administration as usual. Whilst expressing their sorrow over the fate of unfortunate aspiring migrants who died, European leaders were quick to conclude that the solution would not be to open safe legal routes for refugees to access the European territory. Instead, they called for more border control measures especially through technological means of mobility surveillance (e.g. Eurosur), and more funds for the European Border Agency Frontex that embodies the common security-oriented approach of the European Union. Even if the European position was carefully framed with the explicit intent of preventing such tragedies in the future, past experience should already have reminded what happens when some routes are more tightly closed: new and often more dangerous ones open, causing again more unnecessary deaths. Instead of fighting against smuggling and trafficking networks, tightening currently used routes only feeds into the shadow economy, making trips yet again more expensive and all the more dangerous.

On 19 April 2015, a yet deadlier shipwreck took place on the Libyan coast, as a result of which over eight hundred persons died. The year before, 2014, had been the deadliest ever in terms of documented deaths at the Mediterranean Sea, amounting to a toll of 3,279 persons according to the data gathered by the International Organization for Migration (IOM).[1] This increase took place despite the Italian search and rescue (SAR) operation Mare Nostrum that was initiated right after the Lampedusa tragedy and went on for a full year. In the beginning of November 2014, it was replaced by the Frontex Triton operation that never had an explicit focus on saving lives but, instead, it was intended to guard the European borders. Moreover, the maritime area to be covered by Triton was much more limited than that of the Italian national operation. What we witnessed this time again was massive media attention and new promises by the European Union to do something in order to prevent these tragedies from re-occurring. The outcome of an extraordinary meeting on 23 April 2015 unfortunately remained unconvincing: it was decided that the EU would work towards destroying smugglers' boats and that it would triple the budget of the Frontex Triton operation. Untouched was the mandate of the Frontex that stipulates how the Agency is not a search and rescue (SAR) organism, with the Frontex Executive Director Fabrice Leggeri's outcry in the international media arguing that saving lives at

sea is not, and should not, be a priority for the Agency.[2] The meeting did not result in creating any concrete possibilities for legal ways of entry to the EU territory. I had the feeling of having heard all this before.

Yet, what happened further on over the year 2015, and the early months of 2016 in terms of European responses to migrants and refugees in the Mediterranean proved to be difficult to imagine, even for those refugee advocates and academics who had followed the situation and the context for several years. This surprise concerned less the spectacular number of new arrivals that grew higher ever than it had even been in history, or the death toll that increased again by some five hundred persons more, up to 3,735 recorded deaths or missing persons over the year 2015.[3] Rather, the surprise relates to events unfolding both in terms of decision-making and civil society action accelerated especially over the latter part of the year. This refers, on the one hand, to the speed with which political decisions concerning both welcoming new arrivals were made and withdrawn. This signified allocating responsibilities on the newly arrived between different EU member states only to later evade these responsibilities, the successive closures of the borders, and organising deportation or removals of those deemed unworthy of a residence permit. On the other hand, surprising was the speed and enthusiasm with which lay individuals and groups responded to the 'crisis' by coming together to express solidarity and provide help for the newly arrived when governments and other established actors failed. This paper documents and analyses these developments in the making.

The paper draws on my multi-sited ethnographic research conducted at different border areas,[4] with a focus on the border between Greece and Turkey, passing by the border between France and the United Kingdom (UK). Inspired by Suvedrini Perera's quest for tracing 'the possibilities of an embodied refugee poetics for inscribing new geographies across the global borderlands',[5] I weave my interlocutors' stories with my own auto-ethnographic narrative. Perera writes: 'Through their movements, these refugee bodies enact new spatial and political materialities, and inscribe embodied counter-geographies and relations. Like the itineraries of its subjects, the narrative here is neither continuous nor whole, animated by diverse currents and confluences and by shifting interpretations.'[6] So I ask, too, that the reader bear with me as the narratives unfold – they are bound to remain open-ended as they are excerpts of on-going trajectories: they are snapshots on an ethnographic research unfolding. Another crucial issue to be highlighted in the above quote is the emphasis on material corporealities and political materialities. I argue that these border-crossings are first and foremost a corporeal enterprise, wherein the moving subjects, by their movement through space, enact manifold corporeal resistance to the prevailing orders in plural[7].

'There are Women and Children on Board!' Exploring Gender and Vulnerabilities

The debates immediately after the 2013 Lampedusa tragedy hit me particularly hard as I followed them while talking to people who had themselves been victims of one or, as had been the case for most of the persons I talked to, several 'pushbacks' – illegal deportations – both in the Aegean Sea and the Evros region border area between Greece and Turkey.[8] Desperately seeking for a safe haven, people from, for example, Afghanistan, Eritrea, Iran, Iraq, Somalia, Sudan, and Syria had found themselves pushed back to Turkey by the Greek border authorities, whether border guards at the land border or coast guards at sea. As the names of the countries already indicate, my interlocutors were fleeing chaos, wars, and dictatorial regimes. I talked to Syrian families who had either been turned away in their entirety, with small babies pushed back together with adult family members, or who had been dispersed as some family members had managed to get to the other side of the border safely, whereas others had been thus far less lucky in their attempts. I talked to a Somalian woman, six months pregnant for her first child, who showed me the marks on her back, outcomes of having been beaten by Greek coast guards when caught at sea. All this was happening at a moment when the international community remained paralysed in any attempt to bring an end to the war in Syria, and limited itself to expressing regret over the killings and humanitarian crisis that has extended far beyond the country's borders. Already at that time it was recognised how the Syrian refugee crisis was becoming unbearable in the neighbouring countries, yet the offers for hospitality provided by most European states remained cosmetic at best. It was publicly acknowledged that Syrians were not to be sent back, yet they figured among other nationalities that were being deported illegally, as they have figured among those who had failed in their efforts to reach Lampedusa safely.

A change in these border practices took place in early 2015 with the change of government in Greece. This change becomes evident by looking at the numbers of arrivals by sea over the year 2015, recorded by Frontex for example with figures up to some 885,400 arrivals mainly to Greek islands[9], which would not have been possible had the guards followed all the previous orders of keeping the unwanted out. However, this change did not prevent deaths altogether, as the annual death toll attests. One of the victims of these murderous borders became better known than any other.

In the beginning of September 2015, the image of Aylan Kurdi circulated in traditional and social media alike. Little Aylan was a three-year old boy from Kobane, Syria, lying dead on the beach near Bodrum, on the Turkish coast. He had drowned in the early hours of Wednesday, 2 September 2015, in a useless attempt to cross the Aegean Sea and reach the territory of the European Union with his family. I browsed through my Facebook newsfeed several times a day, and each time I saw someone posting a picture of his vulnerable little body lying on the sand. Suddenly, more people than before felt concerned. They felt the need to do something – they liaised. I was

not surprised to see this massive reaction to this circulating image. The image is terribly touching; it connects people emotionally to one another. As with many other iconic images of war and suffering, it resonates with sentiments in its very familiarity. Later in the same evening I signed an umpteenth petition calling for the European leaders to stop this tragedy but when I was about to share the call with my social media friends, I saw the image of little Aylan appear on the cover of the appeal. I could not share the call. I felt physically sick. Aylan's picture is heart-breaking, yet this was not the reason for my reluctance, even inability to relate to it in such a way. He looked as if sleeping on his tummy, facing the sand, with his little arms stretched along his body, fingers curled. His little feet are neatly leaning towards the left side of his body. As a mother of two boys, I see my own sons sleeping a few years back, on their little tummies, with their arms stretched, in peace. The image of Aylan is almost too beautiful to signify what it actually signifies: the murderous borders of the European Union and the innocent victims falling prey at those borders. The tragedy focalises on his face touching the waterfront, rendering it clear that he has drowned in the salty water. Closing my eyes I saw the face of another little Syrian baby boy, Salar, whom I met in Izmir, Turkey, in the autumn of 2013. He would be coming close to Aylan's age provided that he has survived. I have not heard of him and his family since we said goodbyes on the Aegean coast, where I took a regular boat to reach the Greek island of Chios. And this was when my tears started to run.

The impact of the touching image of little Aylan did not last long, however, nor was the general affection it generated able to contribute to any long-term change in the European approach to migrants and refugees. Instead of opening any legal avenues for people to reach the EU territory without risking their lives, an average of two children continue to die at sea every day.[10] While Greece has struggled to fulfil its obligations under the international law as regards to forbidding push-backs at sea, however, its EU partners have sought exactly the opposite, first by signing a deal with Turkey, and toppling that by the deployment of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) troops at the Aegean Sea in February 2016. Whilst the deal with Turkey is one clear example of officialised externalisation practices in line with the European quest for pushing the border control outside its own territory,[11] the latter denotes a form of even more cynical practice of militarising borders in order to stop any arrivals altogether.[12] What may have been framed with the intent of saving lives when the military operation on the Libyan coasts was introduced in April 2015, is now turning into an outright call for war-like measures against people in search for a safe haven.

Practices of Hospitality

Sometimes there is no legal framework, whatsoever or effective in practice, within which to seek asylum. This pushes persons in need of, and entitled to, international protection in a position where a legal option is practically non-extant. In Algeria I already knew this was the case. This is something I was surprised to learn in Greece in 2013, despite many analyses and critiques of

the dysfunctional system I had heard from people who had continued their journeys further into the EU territory, and read about already several years earlier. Despite the action plan on asylum and migration that would grant the process to civil authorities, persons arriving to Greece and seeking asylum tended to end up in a legal limbo where chances of even having a first decision on the asylum application are extended too far in the future. Over the year 2015, with the rapidly increasing numbers of new arrivals, this system was unable to function and provide shelter for people while they were waiting, even when waiting meant a ride from the islands to the mainland. Where the official support is practically non-existent, solidarity actors become even more vital for providing support for the people in need.

Practices of hospitality by civil society, observed over years, show that chasing after and turning people back are not the only solutions available when encountering persons in irregular situations. One of the examples of a self-organised solidarity action was the open camp 'Village of All Together' hosted in a former camp site PIKPA in the island of Lesvos, Greece, that first became operational in late autumn 2012.[13] I learnt about its working through the stories I heard when visiting the island the following autumn. As was recounted by local and international activists, the camp functioned through donations by local people and through shared tasks in cooking and cleaning the area. It was a space of sharing and conviviality, where everyone was welcome as they were. Above all, these narratives illustrate how collective action, centred on the notion of hospitality, can be truly empowering, especially when ordinary people prove successful in providing desperately needed practical solutions and mobilising solidarity around a cause in a way that is able not only to resist repressive practices but to provide alternatives to the prevailing repressive structures. Similar practices of everyday life engagement I have witnessed across the sites I have traversed throughout this research journey, and they are ever more important in the present context across the European continent where state agents were first perplexed by the sudden increase in the numbers of people on the move across Europe, but then argued for their inability to accommodate the people who continue to be on the move, calling into question the very right to seek asylum.

In Calais and its surroundings in the north of France, I have talked to local actors who have for years organised themselves for delivering food and clothes as well as fulfilling other basic needs to persons in transit who aspire to reach the UK. In September 2009, a self-organised, large Afghan camp commonly called 'the Jungle' was dismantled under the pretext of fighting against transnational crime, namely human trafficking. None was charged for this serious crime, however, and my interviewees at the French Ministry of Immigration, Integration, National Identity and Inclusive Development, mainly in charge of the dismantling and its aftermath, confirmed that it is not during these kinds of spectacular operations that any serious criminals would be caught. The operation nevertheless destroyed a fairly well functioning shadow structure in the migrant reception – 'the Jungle' had been the most organised of all irregular settlements in the region, resembling a village of its own. Many local activists expressed how tired they are of the situation: seeing

it never change towards the better but worsen instead. At the same time, activists needed to keep up with their routinised tasks of food deliveries and collecting warm clothes and blankets not only for the new-comers in the region, but to replace those destroyed in frequent police raids into the temporary settlements and squatted houses. During 2015, the number of people residing more or less permanently in Calais, Dunkirk, and their surroundings, reached some 8,000 people, with convoys of aid coming with voluntary workers across borders to respond to a humanitarian crisis deepening day by day.

As it becomes clear from the above, from official sides (such as governments and related institutions) there is very little hospitality offered but they rather engage in practices that resembles a constant war against people on the move. Much has been written on the solidarity actors engaged in providing hospitality by welcoming and working with migrants at different sites, such as – to take other examples from the immediate Mediterranean neighbourhood – Lampedusa in Italy[14] and Patras in Greece[15]. At these sites as in many others, local actors feel touched by the fate of the persons considered as unwanted by the authorities, and mobilise to provide much needed humanitarian aid in the form of food, clothes and blankets, essential health care, and legal aid to ease mobile individuals' access to rights such as asylum. Sometimes local activists form alliances with transnational networks of actors to gain more visibility for the situation and to recruit new people for the daily voluntary work.

Something that I wish to propose next, however, is to extend the idea of hospitality from the most obvious dwellers, either local or transnational activists, to the persons on the move exercising hospitality. This shift in perspective could be done by taking a less essentialising look on who can act as the host and who can be addressed as the one to be hosted. During my visits to different field-sites across Europe and the Mediterranean, I have been amazed by many warm encounters and welcome in situations where one would hardly imagine it to be possible. In practice this denotes an experience of a shared humanity culminated in moments of laughter and playfulness even when my interlocutor, administratively speaking in an irregular situation, has been subjected to inhuman and degrading treatment by authorities. I am not fully sure if I were personally able to act as humanely as most of the persons on the move who I have encountered during these years, had I been travelling for weeks and months, sometimes years, in an attempt to reach a place that deliberately does not want any of the kind of people that I seem to represent for those in power. Instead of hostility, however, I have been cordially welcomed to have a cup of tea to get warmer in a cold squatted house in wintery northern France, or offered a seat in the shadow as 'you must be tired Ma'am, walking around and standing in the sun all day' at the harbour of Mytilene on the island of Lesvos, Greece. When this is uttered by a man who has taken a nightly boat from the Turkish coast to the Greek side of the border, then wandered around the island for several days in torn shoes seeking to finally find an authority to receive him and his fellow travellers, I cannot but smile. 'You are telling me I must be tired?' 'But I am a man, I need

to be strong, you as a woman are weaker'. And we smile at each other; I keep my Nordic feminist opinions to myself but refuse to find a place to sit in the shadow, continuing to chat instead. We both are strangers on this Greek island, I am certainly perceived as a more legitimate visitor in the eyes of the authorities but he is welcoming me in the temporarily conquered small space in the harbour that he has been inhabiting with his fellow travellers since the early hours of the same morning. Something that we, my French and Greek colleagues and I, manage to do is to convince the police to take responsibility over the registration of these persons, whom they have been avoiding together with coast guards, sending the persons from one authority to another. The act of hospitality we succeed in having: the authorities' offer is limited to a closed van equipped with barred windows that comes to pick up the group, in order to transport them to an odd place we initially thought was destined for a first reception of the newly arrived, but which resembled any closed detention centre with high surveillance and very limited mobility. Despite the peculiarity of the situation for someone who wishes to see herself as a migrants' rights advocate, running after the different police units to convince them to arrest and detain persons in an irregular administrative situation, the entrants to the closed van shout happily their thanks and blow kisses to our direction.

These practices of offering a cup of tea or suggesting a place to sit in the shadow attest to a form of hospitality that ceases to be a matter of European citizens hosting the guests who have arrived from elsewhere. Instead, this form of hospitality translates into a more local contextualisation of host-ness, of acting as a host in a very locally defined place such as a squatted house, or a few square meters on a dockside. Only rarely my interlocutors have seen in me a representative of the violent border system, embodied in a European citizen who more or less accepts and legitimises the existence of such a system. I could understand it happening more often; yet when it happens, I try to explain that I do not approve the system that is being built in the name of my security.

Conclusions

Concluding this paper my thoughts travel towards people I have met across the sites. I heard news from a young Sudanese man I encountered in Izmir, Turkey, in early October 2013, who made his way forward to the European soil but was then stuck as his finances dried out before he succeeded in reaching a destination that he could have imagined as a more permanent one. He wrote me asking what to do, as his friends had continued their journeys but he would soon lose even his latest place to sleep in. I had no contacts in that place to help him out and he poured his disappointment out to me. There was nothing I could do except for being there, letting him have someone to be held responsible for a trip that does not seem to get him where he wishes, within a timeline that he was envisaging. He complained of the cold, my only return was to reply that it might just be getting colder again, the more north he will go. Yet, the next time I heard from him, he had made it to the UK, the

destination of his dreams, slowly, over several months. He managed to resist the cold and continued also to resist the borders that sought to prevent him from reaching his aspirations.

My question for now, my quest if you may, concerns the ways in which these practices of hospitality, already out there, could be spread and extended at a moment when the turn to oneself seems again more evident than ever. What happens at those interstices where human connections shape the coming together of corporeal beings, and these beings recognise their inter-connectivity and the need for one another's support, their ultimate relatedness? And why does it seem utterly impossible to translate this connectivity and reciprocal relatedness into officialised practices that would not depend on sporadic encounters but would comprise at least some degree of universality in their applicability? Beginning to think through these questions, recognising our common vulnerabilities and strengths, could pave a way towards a more hospitable and thus less hostile future.

Notes

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[11] Different forms of externalisation practices have been widely documented and theorized. See, for example, Hyndman, Jennifer, and Wenona Giles. 'Waiting for what? The feminization of asylum in protracted situations', *Gender, Place & Culture: A Journal of Feminist Geography*, 18.3 (2011), 361–379; Carling, Jørgen, and María Hernández-Carretero. 'Protecting Europe and Protecting Migrants? Strategies for Managing Unauthorized Migration from Africa', *The British Journal of Politics & International Relations*, 13.1 (2011), 48–52; Mountz, Alison, and Jenna M. Loyd. 'Constructing the Mediterranean Region: Obscuring Violence in the Bordering of Europe's Migration "Crises"', *ACME: An International E-journal for Critical Geographies*, 13.2 (2014), 173–195; Andersson, Ruben. *Illegality, Inc. Clandestine Migration and the Business of Bordering Europe*. Oakland: University of California Press, 2014.

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Gender, Development Induced Displacement, and Resistance: Women Uprooted by River Erosion in West Bengal and Bangladesh

By

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Abstract: Approximately three quarters of the world refugee and IDP population is comprised of women and children. Due to numerous factors, including restricted access to employment, resources and education, inadequate reproductive health care, and exclusion from matters of decision making, women constitute one of the most vulnerable categories among the internally displaced.[1] In South Asia particularly, the power of the state is always weighted largely against women, and women often end up being the worst victims of the phenomenon of displacement. In spite of their victimisation, displaced women are often seen to create and organise movements for seeking justice. Hence, displaced women should never only be viewed as victims, as doing so would be a negation of their experiences and agency.[2] Recurrent river erosion on the banks of south western Bangladesh in areas such as Khulna has resulted, since early 2000, in a massive displacement of the local population due to different development projects, for example, shrimp farming. Simultaneously, the slow but steady erosion of the river Ganges, owing to the construction of the Farakka Barrage in the district of Malda in West Bengal, India, has resulted in the people residing in the area losing their homes. This paper will draw upon archival sources of data – national and state government reports on policy and planning, district human development reports, reports generated by non-governmental organisations (both local and international) working in the river erosion affected areas of Malda and Khulna, the UN Charters on Internal Displacement, news material from national and sub-national dailies, and local newspapers published in

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Malda and Khulna – to examine the impact of river erosion induced displacement on the lives of women. It will also explore how these women have emerged as forces of resistance to the process of displacement instead of being victimised by it. In what ways do women depend on resettlement policies undertaken by the government and other organisations for their well-being? How do they cope, and what are the means by and through which they combat the phenomenon of displacement?

Keywords: Displacement, forced migration, development, resistance, coping mechanisms

Introduction: Locating Gender and Development in the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement

In South Asia, the situation of internally displaced persons (IDPs) is very challenging as they are often unable to migrate from sites of conflict unlike refugees, and they have to remain within the confines of a state that compels them to move in the first place. The category of IDPs in South Asia was accorded visibility during the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka. Towards the end of 1995, Sri Lanka was home to more than one million IDPs. It was around this time that there was a growing international recognition of the fact that women IDPs constitute a unique category on account of their sheer number[3]. The UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement which were drafted around this period paid attention to the crucial fact that 'the overwhelming majority of the internally displaced are women and their dependent children'[4].

The Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement define as well as outline the rights of IDPs. According to the Guiding Principles, IDPs are, 'persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights, or natural or human made disasters and who have not crossed an Internationally recognized State border'[5]. These principles are primarily addressed to governments with the point of departure being a 'positive notion of sovereignty not as a barrier to the realization of rights but as an affirmative duty.'[6]

Principle 3 of the Guiding Principles states that 'National authorities have the primary duty and responsibility to provide protection and humanitarian assistance to internally displaced persons within their jurisdiction.'[7] The Guiding Principles places the responsibility for observing the rights articulated by them not only to governments but to 'all authorities, groups and persons irrespective of their legal status'[8] (Principal 2). The Guiding Principles thus address civil society, humanitarian organisations, rebel groups, and any other entities or persons that might have an impact on the displaced. Such an approach builds on the principles of humanitarian law which bind both state forces and rebel armies in situations of armed conflict along with modern trends in international law, thereby extending their reach

beyond national authorities to include other entities, even individuals.[9] This has resulted in the increasing application of international criminal law to specific crimes committed against humanity.[10]

The Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement have made every effort to prioritise gender issues.[11] Principal 11 of the Guiding Principles calls for the protection of IDPs from acts of violence that are gender specific in nature, in addition to forced prostitution, and all other forms of indecent assault.[12] Principle 18 proposes that special efforts are to be made for ensuring the full participation of displaced women in planning and distributing basic supplies such as sanitation and essential medical services, appropriate clothing, basic housing, potable water, and essential food items.[13] Principle 19 states that special attention must be paid to the medical needs of internally displaced women, including access to female healthcare services and providers along with appropriate counselling for displaced women who are victims of sexual or any other kind of abuse.[14] According to Principle 20 both men and women must have equal rights for obtaining documents that are necessary for enjoying and exercising legal rights such as marriage certificates, birth certificates, personal identification documents, and passports. They shall also enjoy the right to have these documents issued in their very own names.[15]

Principal 23 of the Guiding Principles calls for special efforts to be made in ensuring the full as well as equal participation of girls and women in educational programs. It also states that whenever conditions permit, training and education facilities should be made accessible to IDPs, particularly women and adolescents, irrespective of whether they reside in camps or not.[16] In addition to the UN Guiding Principles, the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Optional Protocol of 1999 have played a significant role in guiding national governments to undertake proactive measures in reducing discrimination faced by displaced women.

In present times, people who are displaced by development projects or development initiatives 'represent the single largest sub category within the global totality of IDP's with most left impoverished by the experience.'[17] It is therefore considered necessary 'to fully mobilize the social science conceptual and operational tools available to address involuntary population displacement and resettlement.'[18] Originally, the UN Guiding Principles were not composed to address every issue associated with development induced displacement. However, they are applicable to and relevant for displacement that is brought about by development projects. Principles 7, 9, 18, 28, and 29 are in accordance with the guidelines of the World Bank in relation to involuntary settlement.[19]

When it comes to development induced displacement, a middle ground approach has been adopted by many states. The states are, on the one hand, open to the idea of receiving external technical assistance and funding for launching development projects. On the other hand, however, when development projects are executed and displacement occurs, accompanied by evidence of impoverishment, denial of rights as well as arbitrary treatment of displaced people, the states may oppose any outside remedies or advice. [20]

The international community is therefore challenged to locate mechanisms for effective and adequate international response, at a time when actions of the nation state appear ineffective and there is considerable suffering among the persons concerned.[21]

Including development induced displacement within the framework of the UN Guiding Principles poses numerous challenges to the representative of the UN Secretary General as well as to several UN and other international agencies and non-governmental organisations that are concerned with the problems of IDPs. [22] Firstly, the number of people around the world who ought to be counted as IDPs under this framework shall result in the addition of at least ten million people on a yearly basis to the already existing estimates of people displaced by conflict.[23] Secondly, it will lead to a loss of coherence where the protection regime is concerned. The causes of development projects are often quite varied as is the number of people who are affected by them. It would therefore be difficult to apply the Guiding Principles in every situation of development induced displacement. Thirdly, if the definition of IDPs was to include development induced displacement, there would be considerable resistance from the states as they may fear that this 'would give considerable scope to the International community to find pretexts to interfere in their domestic affairs'.[24] While the states are usually willing to assist and rehabilitate victims of natural disasters and may even provide aid to conflict induced IDPs when it is in their interests to do so, it has been noted that 'Governments naturally fight harder to maintain the concept of national sovereignty when the perpetrator of displacement is the State itself.'[25]

Development is often regarded as a right to which the entire population of a country ought to have access. At the same time, people also have the right to protection from the negative effects of development such as the loss of political, civil, social and economic rights, and arbitrary eviction. The goal of evolving international norms and guidelines is to improve lives and livelihoods before and during displacement, which should be both a participatory and transparent process.[26] It is therefore an imperative for national governments to familiarise themselves with the UN Guiding Principles and its provisions that apply to development projects, and also to incorporate these Principles, together with the guidelines of the World Bank, into their own laws and policies. National Action Plans on Human Rights, which include provisions for preventing and protecting people from arbitrary displacement brought about by development, should also be adopted. [27]

Gender and Displacement in South Asia: A Brief Overview

South Asia has witnessed an enormous rise in internal displacement over the last two decades. IDPs in South Asia are in fact more susceptible to danger than refugees because of a dearth of legal mechanisms to guide their care and rehabilitation.[28] The bodies of women often serve as a battleground for the contestation of male power[29]. It has been observed that 'mystified notions of chastity' have guided the attitude towards women in South Asia[30]. As a result,

it has been widely accepted that women 'belong' entirely to their communities. In South Asia, women are often tortured, molested, and raped to shame men.[31] The notion of honour is often played up by the media to incite groups of people against each other. For instance, after the Godhra genocide, false media reports of Hindu women being raped by Muslim men resulted in Muslim women being targeted during the riots.[32]

Women are both patronised and abused by states in South Asia, which is clearly evident in many state responses to the displacement of women.[33] In Sri Lanka, the state was unwilling to involve any women's groups in peace talks notwithstanding Resolution 1325 of the UN. In India, when the issue of women's torture in Gujarat was raised in the parliament, the Defence Minister commented that such things happen in civil war[34]. Women in most South Asian societies reside under rigid patriarchal conditions in which they are valued solely as symbols of honour in their communities, which control and limit their mobility in many different ways. When affected by state policies, these women are often unprepared to deal with administrative authorities, which make them more vulnerable in the system. State policies seldom acknowledge that populations that become displaced are mostly feminine populations. Rehabilitation programs for the displaced are therefore generally gender-neutral in nature[35].

Apathy concerning the specific needs of displaced women can thus be evident even during the organisation processes of resettlement camps. State authorities very easily invoke the national security rationale when they are criticised by human rights groups for their insufficient or misguided efforts and policies towards the displaced. In doing so, they often successfully manage to divert attention away from the unsatisfactory conditions of the displaced women. This is clearly evident, for example, in the case of people who are displaced along the line of control or the LOC between Pakistan and India.[36] The right to define what national security entails is always appropriated by the state. If a minority or a group of tribal women suffer, their sacrifices are justified in the nation's name[37]. It is often the female minority population that gets displaced, for instance, the Adivasi[38], Muslim and tribal women in India[39], the ethnic minority women in Burma[40], the Tamil women in Sri Lanka[41], the Tibeto-Burman women in Nepal[42], and the Jumma women in Bangladesh[43].

The various efforts made by displaced women to cope with their plight shows that they are more than mere victims of the phenomenon of displacement. Women IDPs in the resettlement camps focus their energies on raising their children as if they were in a stable and safe environment.[44] In the IDP camps in Sri Lanka women have sought more actively work than men.[45] In Gujarat, women in the camps have been continuously looking for work.[46] Women are said to maintain cohesiveness within the family by continuously assessing the situation and considering it as their duty to provide their dependents with financial aid as well as emotional security.[47] An analyst has noted with regard to displaced women in Sri Lanka that 'displacement and camp life had also provided spaces for empowerment of several Tamil

Women who had taken on the role of head of household for various reasons'.[48]

Protest movements among the displaced in South Asia are largely organised by women. Notwithstanding their trauma and personal loss, it is the displaced women who usually take the initiative to organise movements for peace and justice.[49] During the Narmada Bachao Andolan, that is, the Save Narmada movement, women protested against the state repression even in the face of severe reprisals and human rights abuses[50]. In Gujarat, women IDPs rallied under the banner of Women for Peace.[51] They organised camps where women underwent blood tests to show their communities that blood groups were independent of either caste or religion[52]. Women's groups along the Thai-Burmese border are known to often provide aid to the incoming refugee women[53]. In Burma, women sometimes travel to the conflict zones to help other women in these areas in spite of huge risks that this poses to their own lives.[54]

Understanding River Erosion Induced Displacement in West Bengal and Bangladesh

Constant river erosion along the banks of south western Bangladesh in areas such as Khulna has contributed to large scale displacement among the local population since the early 2000. Simultaneously, the slow but steady erosion of the river Ganges in the district of Malda in the Indian state of West Bengal has resulted in many people becoming displaced and destitute. According to the stricter definitions of IDPs, their displacement may not be considered as politically sensitive as displacement caused by civil war, occupation, or aggression.[55] Women and their dependent children constitute a majority of the displaced population in both regions. It is the displaced women in these areas who are made to bear the greatest brunt of displacement – they are often left to fend for themselves and their offspring when their husbands migrate to other areas in search of economic opportunities.[56]

Although river erosion was a phenomenon well known in both West Bengal and Bangladesh, notably in the districts of Khulna and Malda since the 1980s, the problem became much more acute in the early years of the 21st century, owing to the advent of many large-scale developmental projects, which prompted state authorities in both areas to take notice of the severity of the problem. The first *National Adaptation Program of Action* for dealing with the consequences of climate change was brought out by the Ministry of Environment and Forest of the People's Republic of Bangladesh in a report published in 2005. According to the report, the geographical setting of Bangladesh makes the country highly vulnerable to natural disasters. Every year one or more natural calamities are known to upset the people of the country. Some of the major natural hazards listed in the report are tornadoes, earthquakes, landslides, drought, flash floods, drought and storm surges, and finally, river bank erosion. In the case of Khulna in particular, the trend of saline intrusion since 2003, is quite significant, facilitating large scale river erosion. What makes saline intrusion so evident in this case is the fact that the

main power stations in Khulna need to collect fresh water in order to cool their boilers by sending a barge upstream to get fresh water. Over the last decade, the barge has had to go further and further upstream in order to get suitably fresh water for the purpose. An important factor for saline intrusion, as mentioned in the report, is the withdrawal of water at the Farakka barrage by India to divert the water flows to Calcutta. The report mentions that the livelihoods and everyday lives of people who are already affected by river erosion are likely to become severely impacted if, and when more than half of their land will submerge below water.

According to the *Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan* (2008) by the Ministry of Environment and Forest's Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, a comprehensive study will be carried out on the impact of river erosion on women and gender relations, on the basis of which specific recommendations will be developed to address the main problems. However, hitherto no report has been generated on this comprehensive study, and local newspapers such as the *Daily Star, Bangladesh Today*, and the *Dhaka Tribune* have not reported on the impact of river erosion on women or provided any evidence of gender sensitivity in resettlement policies.

The *District Human Development Report for Malda*, prepared by the Government of West Bengal in 2006, states that river erosion has been occurring since the early 19th century. However, in the early years of the 21st century the problem has taken a serious turn due to the construction of the Farakka barrage. When investigations on human vulnerability in the area were conducted by the drafters of the report, it was found that there were two main kinds of losses among the displaced people. One was the complete destruction of their assets such as the sweeping away of numerous equipments by rivers or the collapse of their houses, and the second was major damage unfolding to their properties or assets, for instance, to a house, a vehicle or other equipment in a manner which resulted in a substantial loss in its value. Because of river erosion, many erstwhile cultivators in the survey region have been reduced to landlessness. Most of the respondent households now depend on wage labour for either their primary or secondary livelihoods, while only a few of them practice agriculture in any form. The majority of the households are now dependent on artisanship and trade. With their livelihood choices becoming limited, less than half of the respondents reported any earnings from a secondary occupation. The report does not provide any information on how women in the surveyed areas are specifically impacted by river erosion or how it possibly affects the women's efforts to take care of their families.

It is important to note that between 2000 and 2010 international and domestic provisions for the protection of the IDPs were widened in both India and Bangladesh, as an addition to the fundamental rights already effective for the protection of such persons in both countries. This was when Bangladesh became a signatory of the UN Convention of Human Rights, and thus was bound to abide by its mandate. Bangladesh became a member of the UNHCR in 2002, and consequently, was bound to abide by its mandate as

well as to take into account the Guiding Principles relating to IDPs. In India, the *National Resettlement and Rehabilitation Policy*, whose draft was prepared in 1998 by the then Ministry of Rural Development, gained the status of official policy in 2007. It was the first state led effort towards providing assistance and protection to IDPs. The primary objectives of the National R&R Policy are to ensure minimum displacement, assist resettled individuals to achieve better standards of life than before their displacement, and finally, to enable displaced people to enjoy the benefits of development projects on the same scale as the other beneficiaries in cases where displacement is caused by the implementation of such projects. As a member of the Executive Committee of the UNHCR, also, India is bound by its mandate and thus required to pay regard to the well-being of IDPs in the country.

Assessing the Impact of Displacement on the Lives of Women

The Case of Bangladesh

Almost half of the IDP population in Khulna in Bangladesh consists of women, most of who have taken up residence in makeshift urban settlements. A considerable number of these women have also migrated to bigger cities, and especially to the capital city Dhaka, in search of employment in order to support themselves, their children, and other family members who depend on them.[57] An important reason for displaced women's migration to urban centres is the ostracism they face in their native villages. Many women IDPs are considered a burden by their extended families and in-laws in rural areas, and some of the most common livelihoods that involve working outdoors or working for others, outside the family, are socially stigmatised.[58]

The lives of women displaced by river erosion are at serious risk due to the absence of support from communities and the state. Women are particularly marginalised because of restricted mobility and limited work opportunities. Very few women engage in paid jobs. Yet, the compulsion to work, among these women, is evident as they are responsible for the well-being of their children and senior members of their families. Displaced women are most often employed in the informal sector – for example, in shrimp industry, small business, and vegetable vending, where they work as daily labourers, domestic helpers, and hawkers.[59] Women, through their participation as economic contributors within their families, thus bring about changes in the macro structure of the labour market. Women are not only making an entry into the labour market, but their space within this labour market is also increasing and becoming more diversified. This is a positive development for women IDPs as it contributes to their inclusion and empowerment at a macro level.[60] By virtue of their participation, women usually manage to carve out a space in their host communities, which gives them the opportunity to influence the structure of their host communities in relation to their livelihoods. When women are able to access the facilities and resources of the host community, it increases their possibilities as a result. This process can be institutionalised in order to empower women to establish

livelihoods on their own, and to encourage the implementation of women friendly policies at the macro (state), community, and household levels.[61]

When it comes to urban utilities, hardly any women IDPs have access to electricity. Lack of proper access to water remains a major area of concern, especially for women IDPs. Drinking water is usually retrieved from municipal taps and from tube wells, many of which are contaminated due to a high concentration of arsenic. Many urban areas suffer from a shortage of municipal water supply due to GW depletion during the summer, as a result of which the living conditions of many IDPs are worsened. The areas where IDPs reside have very poor drainage systems, which often cause water logging during the monsoon season due to heavy rainfall. Unhygienic sanitation and water conditions in the resettlement areas often result in the spread of vector and waterborne diseases such as dengue and diarrhoea, which can severely affect the health of the women.[62]

Most of the houses in urban resettlements have inadequate ventilation that often results in women and children suffering from respiratory tract infections. Some of the other dominant diseases among the women IDP population in Khulna include malnutrition, enclampsia, and UTI.[63] Many adolescent and adult women suffer from various health problems. Due to the lack of medical care facilities in resettlement areas, displaced women have little or no access to medical services. They are usually treated by unskilled medical practitioners from areas nearby with little skills or knowledge on treating illnesses.[64]

Many displaced women also suffer from social insecurities due to losing ties of kinship as a result of migration. Some of the women who belong to the reproductive age become victims of trafficking and eve teasing. A lot of women are forced to engage in smuggling and sex trade due to their urgent need for food and lodging. Women IDPs are also susceptible to crime because of their baseline vulnerability.[65] With regard to financial assets, in the event of displacement one finds a reduction in the household income generating activities of women because of lack or absence of opportunities. As newcomers, many women IDPs fail to receive any financial assistance from their neighbours. Taking public loans, characterised by a high rate of interest, make the women IDPs economically vulnerable. Some women cannot receive any financial assistance because of their displaced status.[66] In cases like this, micro-finance schemes, if introduced, can provide alternative options for women, helping them to adapt to the existing situation.[67]

Left organisations such as the Communist Party of Bangladesh and local non- governmental organisations like Prodipon, Sushilan, and Nijera Kori have mobilised displaced women and men to provide them with a voice in order to improve their situation.[68] Women members of Sushilan have often occupied lands owned by state authorities in order to build some basic infrastructure for women who are most needy in their communities. In some occasions, state authorities have had to comply with the demands of the displaced women as a consequence of their collective action and peer-to-peer solidarity. Landless women in areas affected by river erosion have also taken

part in protests and marches, often accompanied by their dependent children.[69]

The Case of West Bengal

In Malda, women have been the first victims of displacement. Apart from adjusting to domestic hardships women are compelled to provide financial support for their families. Many displaced women are working in the bidi (tobacco) industry, or have become couriers in the smuggling nexus.[70] In the bidi industry women are often paid less than the official rates which are negotiated between the owners or contractors and the bidi workers' trade unions. During the sowing season, some women work in the fields, digging and carrying soil. In these cases, too, women are paid less than male labourers. The greatest problem faced by the women IDPs in the area is the lack of proper health services and sanitation facilities. Most women occupy land which belongs to others and they have no access to toilet facilities. Such facilities are non-existent even in the rehabilitation colonies in Malda, except for some wells and a few toilets that have been built with the help of non-governmental organisations. Access to clean and safe drinking water is a major problem, especially in districts that are arsenic prone. Women have to fetch water from a great distance, which requires a lot of work and often involves many difficulties. Local medical centres do not provide proper medicines or treatment for the displaced. Generally, it is the women and children who suffer from ailments related to malnutrition. Displaced women face numerous sexual risks as well, largely because of their compulsion to appease security guards and men who run smuggling rackets. In some rackets marriages have been arranged for girls of displaced families in distant places such as Bihar.[71] The vulnerability of displaced women is also determined by the religious category to which they belong.[72] Displaced women among the Muslim community, especially widows, receive help from financial practices such as Asul, Zakat, and Fetura. Through such charities, the displaced Muslim women are able to sustain themselves, and consequently, the tendency among them to migrate is decreasing.[73]

In addition to significant changes in the socio-economic space and base of women at both the community and micro household level, changes can also be witnessed at the macro level. The displaced populations, especially women, are becoming more aware of policies and programs that are made available to them by non-state actors.[74] Some of the people displaced by river erosion in Malda have formed organisations to look into their welfare, a notable example being the Ganga Bhangon Pratirodh Nagarik Action Committee. The objective of this organisation is to alleviate the suffering of both human and animal victims of river erosion. It aims at leadership mobilisation and community capacity building in order to protest against exploitative policies and unsatisfactory conditions. The organisation has succeeded in bringing together people from various age groups and communities with diverse political affiliations[75]. Women participate very actively in this organisation.[76]

Women IDPs demonstrate a good deal of forwardness in voicing their demands and needs and in narrating their conditions. Self help groups for women exist in many parts of the areas that are affected by river erosion in the district of Malda in West Bengal. Women who organise such self help groups are usually engaged in efforts to enable other women IDPs to better cope with their situation.[77] The Self Help Group (SHG) programme in Malda was formed through the efforts of the Panchayat and Rural Development Department in 1999.[78] Today there are as many as nine thousand women's self help groups in Malda with an average of ten members per group. These self help groups for women make micro credit available to poor female members of households in the rural areas. The aim is to empower displaced women and enhance their capabilities, thereby reducing vulnerability in the poor rural households. Some of the women are provided training in finance management in order to be able to utilise this knowledge in income generating activities after taking loans from the SHG.[79]

Support provided by the self help groups is not restricted to finance only. Familial and social support is also provided. The displaced women are highly interested in educating their children. Many of them are eager to educate their daughters, an opportunity which most of them have missed out on themselves. Although it is sometimes very challenging to study due to difficult circumstances, women IDPs in Malda have indicated their preference for their daughters to attend school.[80]

Conclusion

The UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement emphasise the protection of women but do not address issues such as women empowerment, or reflect on how women, as active agents, are reconstructing their lives on their own. Owing to such conventional perceptions, the unconventional roles played by women as well as the positive, productive developments which may occur in the context of displacement are not recognised and thus, they cannot be institutionalised through programs or policies.[81]

It is therefore recommended that state authorities in the districts of Malda and Khulna take on a gender sensitive approach towards rehabilitating the displaced in order to assist the empowerment of these already resilient, and resistant, women. Pro-poor and pro-women health services must be initiated, and when displaced women are relocated, they should be provided with certain basic amenities such as sanitation, energy, and water[82]. A significant number of public and private organisations as well as state policies that cater to the welfare and agency of displaced women are also needed for the displaced women to be able to voice their needs and demands in an articulate and consistent fashion. These women should finally receive the assistance they rightfully deserve.[83]

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This Place is not ours: Stateless Women and the Right to Citizenship in Nepal

By

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Abstract: Currently, questions related to citizenship in Nepal are among the most important and most highlighted debates in the public sphere. In the ongoing, vivid public debate there has been basically no discussion on women who are lacking, or being deprived of, citizenship. The situation reflects a more general trend, a lack of presence of marginalised women in the public sphere. What also has been missing in the recent debate is the acknowledgement of the fact that citizenship, or lack of it, can have many different meanings for different people. In seeking to enrich and diversify the debate on citizenship, this paper takes on a journey through narratives of women who do not have citizenship and have experienced marginalisation in Nepal due to their statelessness. The aim is to provide visibility to the accounts of women whose voices remain usually unheard. The paper analyses the stories of three women in order to shed light to everyday realities of women without citizenship. Analysing their experiences is important as they represent acute accounts of statelessness, which currently exists and directly impacts not only their lives but also thousands of other women facing a similar situation in Nepal. To understand why these women lack citizenship, and what they are experiencing in their daily lives because of it, the paper draws on different perspectives and conceptualisations of citizenship, while also reflecting on the current Citizenship Act of Nepal and practices related to it. The paper concludes by recommending that everyone should be entitled to citizenship, and that citizenship documents should be provided to all as a birthright in order to guarantee equal rights, to end discrimination, and to ensure that every person is recognised as an autonomous individual.

Key words: citizenship, belonging, rights, statelessness, identity

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Introduction

> *"Lives may be stories of acceptance, accommodation and compromise, but*
> *they are as much stories of renegotiation, resistance and adaptation."[1]*
>
> — Arun Agrawal

Currently, questions related to citizenship in Nepal are among the most important and most highlighted debates in the public sphere. In the ongoing, vivid public debate there is basically no discussion on women who are lacking, or being deprived of, citizenship. The situation reflects a more general trend, a lack of presence of marginalised women in the public sphere. Additionally, what has been missing in the recent debate is the acknowledgement of the fact that citizenship as well as lack of it can have many different meanings and implications for different people. Individual experiences of a lack of acceptance are multiple and varied, and consequences of statelessness differ substantially from one another.

In an effort to enrich and diversify the ongoing and vivid public debate on citizenship in Nepal, this paper elaborates on the concept of citizenship by taking on a journey through narratives of women who do not have citizenship and have experienced marginalisation due to their statelessness. For some, it may seem that the cases analysed here are somehow exceptional, and in a way they are – if exceptionality is defined in terms of uniqueness. Stateless, marginalised people are not a faceless mass but each of them has an individual story and an identity based on their personal histories and experiences and in connection to a certain time, place, and context. The stories to be presented in this article give visibility to accounts of women whose voices are usually unheard. These women are lacking, or have been deprived of, citizenship due to different reasons, and also the ways in which statelessness affects their lives, varies.

In order to shed light on the everyday realities of women without citizenship in Nepal, the paper analyses the experiences of three women who have been, and are still, in the situation of being stateless in Nepal. One of the women is married to a Tibetan refugee, another is a trafficking survivor, and the third a wife of a Nepalese migrant. The women are from three different geographical regions, the Terai, Hill, and Mountain regions in Nepal. Although the reasons behind their statelessness vary, some of the experiences that they undergo due to their lack of citizenship are quite similar. Analysing their experiences is important as they represent acute accounts of statelessness, which currently exists and directly impacts not only their lives but also thousands of other women facing a similar situation. In order to understand why these women lack citizenship and what they are experiencing in their daily lives because of it, the paper elaborates on different perspectives, perceptions, and conceptualisations of citizenship while also discussing the current Citizenship Act of Nepal and practices related to it.

Theoretically, the paper mainly draws on the work of authors such as Mona Laczo, who writes about deprivation of individual identity of women in Nepal, Naila Kabeer who discusses inclusive citizenship, and the works of

Joanna Pfaff-Czarnecka, Gerard Toffin, and Nira Yuval Davis who conceptualise identity as well as belonging from many different perspectives.

Women without Citizenship in Nepal

I met Sonam when I was doing research for my Master's Dissertation on the Tibetan refugees in Nepal. Sonam is married to a Tibetan refugee who lives in a settlement in Pokhara. Originally, she comes from the Solu Khumbu district in Nepal. Sonam does not have any citizenship document. Her father died when she was very young. For the past five years she has been actively pursuing a citizenship card through the local village development committee. She has visited their office frequently. The Village Development Committee (VDC) members have repeatedly asked her to bring her husband's citizenship document as well as a letter of recommendation from the VDC. When Sonam told them that her husband is a Tibetan refugee, they replied very straightforwardly: 'Oh, then you cannot get the citizenship card. Now, you will have to go and get the document from your husband's side.[2]

When discussing the citizenship rights of Nepalese women it is very important to pay attention to the Citizenship Act of Nepal as well as the practices related to it. Nepal has just promulgated the new Constitution 2072. As per section 3 of the Constitution, fundamental human rights include the right to freedom, the right to dignity, the right to equality, the right to justice, and the right to not be discriminated against. The Constitution also defines the rights of women, especially emphasising the right to live free from gender discrimination and equal rights from descent. Importantly, it is also mentioned that women's rights include rights against violence and discrimination, which outlaws physical, mental, sexual, and psychological violence on the basis of any religious, social or cultural activities and traditions. It is stated that any violation of these rights will be penalised.[3]

In the Article 2, Section 11 of the Constitution it is stated that citizenship will be awarded on the basis of descent, and that both parents have to be Nepali citizens at the time of birth. The article also accords citizenship through naturalisation. In the event that mother is a Nepali national and father a foreign national, a child can gain citizenship by naturalisation and not by descent, limiting women from transferring citizenship by descent. The Citizenship Act states that a foreign woman who is married to a Nepali man can gain naturalised citizenship through marriage immediately, but in cases where a Nepali woman is married to a foreign man, the husband can apply for naturalised citizenship through marriage only after 15 years of marriage. This means that a foreign father can pass citizenship by naturalisation to his children only when – and if – he first gains citizenship for himself.[4]

The Citizenship Act 2006 entitles a Nepali citizen to apply for citizenship at the age of 16. In other words, children under 16 years are not recognised as citizens – citizenship is not a birthright in Nepal.[5] In a study conducted by the Forum for Women, Law and Development (FWLD) in 2011 it was estimated that 4,346,046 people, that is, 23,67 percent of the population does not have a citizenship document. In the three regions of

Nepal, this is most commonly the case among the population in the Mountain region (34 percent), followed by the Hill region (28,5 percent), and the Terai region (17,5 percent). The report mentioned that in 2013 the government conducted mobile camps where it distributed 1,126,430 citizenship documents in order to reduce the number of stateless people in the country. However, despite the government efforts, the number of people without a citizenship document stood at 4,677,053 in 2014. The report points out that citizenship documents do not correlate with the number of eligible people, which can result in an increasing number of stateless people and hence cause more marginalisation and exclusion.[6]

The citizenship document is ultimately the most important document for any individual as it is required when a person, for example, wants to open a bank account or needs to fill in an employment application, register a marriage, or has property[7]. The reasons why people in Nepal do not have a citizenship document are varied. Most people do not apply for it unless it is necessarily required, for example, when applying to a university or when seeking certain kind of a job. In many cases, the process of applying for citizenship can become a real challenge, especially when the person who should provide a recommendation – either father or husband in most cases – is not himself a Nepali citizen, or for some reason does not believe that a citizenship document would be necessary for his wife or a daughter. In some cases, men in the family do not have the capacity to provide a reference for their wife or a daughter being stateless themselves.

This is the case, for example, in Sonam's family. As her husband is a Tibetan refugee, he is not in a position to provide any reference or recommendation concerning citizenship. Although legally Sonam would be eligible for citizenship under the Constitution, both her parents being Nepali, the government officials have refused on the grounds that she is married to a foreigner. As it has been elaborated above, the process of acquisition of the citizenship is typically through descent and for that purpose the applicant's parents must have citizenship. The document can be acquired when a person reaches the age of sixteen. In the case of Sonam, the existing rules and practices are problematic because her father passed away already a long time ago and she does not have access to her father's citizenship. Had she married a Nepali man, she would have gained citizenship through her husband. But this is not possible as her husband is a Tibetan refugee. Although her husband was born in Nepal, he does not have Nepalese citizenship but holds instead a refugee card. For Sonam, it has become painfully evident that in order to obtain citizenship in Nepal, the process should take place either through her father or her husband. So, when the officials suggested her to seek citizenship through her husband, she asked me: 'Will I be able to get a refugee card?'.[8]

Her question alarmed me. It was difficult to make her understand that marriage is not a basis for being a refugee, and because she is not a refugee herself, she cannot gain refugee status through marriage. Had she married a Nepali man, she would have gained citizenship through him because Nepali men can pass citizenship to their wives. Her situation is complicated due to her social connection with a person who is not a Nepali. Sonam's and her

husband's situation resembles and is interlinked with the situation of many other Tibetan refugees[9]. Although most of them have been born in Nepal and lived in the country all their lives, they have not been granted citizenship.

Sonam faces the same situation as her husband, lack of citizenship, although for a different reason. She also experiences and suffers from many of the same limitations and restrictions as her husband. These concern, for example, livelihood choices – if she had a citizenship document, Sonam would have more livelihood options, she could work in a profession of her choice, and earn money to support her family. As I observed her limitations and challenges, her not being able to make the choices she wanted or to pursue her interests motivated and inspired me to interview more women with similar experiences. In the following month, I talked with five different women who had been deprived of their citizenship cards due to being married to Tibetan men.

Listening to their experiences and learning about their manifold difficulties made me aware of the question of becoming 'othered', which meant in this context that the women were bonded in a social relationship outside the kin and country. There are thousands of women in Nepal who are facing a similar situation as Sonam: they have not been able to leave Nepal, never during their lives have they travelled outside the country, and if some of them have crossed the border for any reason, they have experienced serious problems.

I met Nisha when I was visiting a drop-in-centre in Kathmandu where women who work in the entertainment industry take literacy classes. Nisha comes from a village in Nuwakot, the hill district. She is a trafficking survivor. She is taking a course in tailoring at the drop-in-centre. In order to get a certificate of the course she would need a citizenship document. She told me that she would also like to attend a driving course. However, without a citizenship document she would not be eligible for a driving license. After Nisha was trafficked to India, her father, who had disowned her, refused to give her the required recommendation for citizenship. Reflecting on her situation, Nisha told me: 'My identity is what my parents have given me. But that is not enough. I need a document.'[10]

Many women who have experienced being trafficked have been isolated by their families. The lack of acceptance and rejection from their families has resulted in many women renegotiating and trying to redefine their space. For Nisha, the identity she gained from her parents is not enough as it is not reinforced with citizenship. Nisha's experiences resonate with many other women in Nepal who have been trafficked to India and then returned to Nepal. Women who have crossed the borders, usually unwillingly, have first experienced isolation and rejection from their families, and then from the state as their presence in the country is not acknowledged.

In Nepal, as in many other patriarchal countries, there are a lot of women who are never seen in the public sphere. They live their lives in villages, spending most of their time at home, indoors. For example, in villages in Sihara, in the eastern part of Nepal, where agricultural bonded

labour is prevalent, there are many women who do not have citizenship. One of them is Siya Devi.

Siya Devi's husband is a migrant worker currently working in the Middle East. He has been away from home already for three years. The couple has been married for six years. Like many other women in the village, Siya Devi does not have citizenship. Previously, she had not even considered applying for citizenship, but then in a couple of occasions she felt the urgent need for it, for example, when the government refused to provide birth registration for her son. Siya Devi was married very young, when she was only 13 years old. She has never been to school. In many villages in Terai child marriage is common, and girls are married off at a very young age. With the marriage being solemnised, the parents transfer their responsibilities, such as acquiring citizenship documents, to their daughter's husband.

Before giving birth to her son, Siya Devi did not feel the need for citizenship. Now she has learned that a citizenship document is necessary for birth registration, which is needed in school enrolment. However, since her husband is currently working abroad, she will have to wait until he returns back home, which may take several years. Many of the women in the village do not understand the value and significance of citizenship documents. According to Tiwari, many Madhesi women do not have any decision making power within their families and they have been marginalised in many different regards in their communities, which becomes also reflected at the societal level[11].

The experiences of stateless women like Sonam, Nisha, and Siya Devi, three women without citizenship in different parts of Nepal, the mountains, the hills, and the Terai region, vary in many ways but they have also much in common. Their stories elucidate what Mona Laczo has argued: 'In Nepal citizenship rights are still accorded through their male relatives, rather than in their own right. Many women are unaware of the importance of citizenship, yet others associate citizenship with an independent identity, the freedom to make choices and the ability to obtain education, a good job and a future'[12].

Such is the case of the child bride Siya Devi who does not completely understand the importance of citizenship in her everyday life because in the private sphere, at her home, she does not need it for much. She has migrated from one village to another due to her marriage, and she has never been asked, or encouraged, to make decisions on her own life. For her, citizenship is equivalent to a passport, a document she does not need as she does not travel anywhere in contrast to her husband who is a migrant worker and must have a passport. Only when it has come to the matters of her son, Siya Devi has realised that she needs to have a citizenship document of her own, for example, to acquire birth registration for her son.

For the trafficking survivor Nisha, gaining a citizenship through her father's lineage is not possible as it does not get re-endorsed with her father refusing to provide her with the required recommendation. However, just like any other individual, she needs an independent identity, which can provide her with a space in which to restore self-esteem and continue her life after her

tragic trafficking experiences. Nisha wants to reinforce her belief that she can have an identity that no-one can take away from her.

Sonam's life has become limited because she married a person of her choice, a man who happened to be a refugee, which means that he cannot help Sonam in her citizenship application.

Public Sphere, Space, and Inclusion

With the new Constitution being promulgated, the federal structure and the laws are to be developed. In the sub-section 47 of Section 3 it is stated that laws to be attached with the new Constitution will be formulated within the period of three years. After its promulgation, there have been many protests in the Madhesh region against the new Constitution. In Nepal, many identity movements have emerged after the first democratic movement in 1990, demanding a more pluralistic society as well as more inclusion. According to Lawoti, different groups have different values, and they need to be recognised in order to overcome exclusion and domination in the society[13]. Currently, the public debate on citizenship in Nepal is heavily focused on questions of citizenship by naturalisation and citizens' participation in the political space. Due to the current unrest in Terai, the discussion revolves around issues related to proportionate participation, that is, inclusion of political participation by persons who have gained citizenship by naturalisation. The public discussion and the whole country have been focusing on this particular agenda in the Terai region, while the nation has been recovering from a serious earthquake in the Hill region.

Public debate, on any issue, takes place in the public sphere. Rajeev Bhargava defines public sphere as an inter-communicative space that in principle is available 'to everybody and into which people may bring issues that concern every person'[14]. He further explains that discussions in the public sphere always carry with them the potential of influencing political decision-makers and the government.[15] Therefore, it is so important to include and represent the voices of marginalised women in the public sphere, especially in the case of stateless women because, as argued by Naila Kabeer, the 'societal understanding' of citizenship connects a person to a particular group wherefrom they can define themselves and their identities[16].

Despite the presence of a provision in the Constitution that guarantees citizenship for all, marginalisation of the excluded does exist, as has been demonstrated through the cases of the three women in this article. They will never gain citizenship unless the citizenship application process and some of the provisions are changed. Setting aside legal barriers that stand in the way of including all people and making them citizens of Nepal, one of the most important steps to be taken is to actualise the principle of non-discrimination. For the principle to become effective, many measures must be taken. For example, all public spaces, including the public sphere, should be open to all kinds of persons regardless of any social or national categories.

While exploring questions related to citizenship, this article has attempted to discover what aspects of citizenship are meaningful for people

who do not have citizenship, and how they define their own situations which may be, from the outside, interpreted in terms of exclusion, or being 'extremely precarious'[17]. Whereas Sonam has decided to continue her struggle of trying to convince government officials and the refugee officer, Nisha has prioritised something else – she seeks to adapt to the circumstances with limited opportunities and hopes to be able to reconcile with her father one day. When it comes to Siya Devi, although she did not previously 'need' citizenship, now she is prepared to work towards it because she wants her son to get a birth certificate. In prioritising different issues, the three women have given different meanings to the lack of citizenship in their lives, taking also different approaches for acquiring it. For Sonam, citizenship would provide more livelihood options and work opportunities, for Nisha it would reinforce her identity and sense of belonging, and for Siya Devi, citizenship would be helpful, for example, in educating her children.

These three women aspire to the same values, or rather similar value sets that Kabeer has talked about in the context of 'inclusive citizenship'[18]. In reflecting on different 'notions of justice', she has elaborated on when it would be 'fair for people to people to be treated same and when it is fair to be treated equally'[19]. Kabeer associates recognition with citizenship, highlighting simultaneously the 'recognition of the intrinsic worth of all human beings but also recognition and respect for their differences'[20]. She has argued for a conceptualisation of citizenship that is not only associated with economic possibilities but also with dignified life[21]. In emphasising a set of values where self-determination is one of the most important aspects, she stresses 'the ability to exercise some degree of control' over one's life[22], and encourages a notion of solidarity that includes 'the capacity to identify with others and to act in unity with them in their claims for justice and recognition'[23]. Similarly, Oommen, who believes that human beings drive towards equality as well as identity, regards citizenship as 'inclusionary and equality oriented' at the same time[24].

Whereas Nisha aspires to citizenship for the sake of recognition and Siya Devi for the sake of self-determination, for Sonam, it is a question over a dignified life. All three of them seek justice and want to exercise their right to be treated equally and included in the society. Becoming officially a Nepalese citizen would open up new spaces and extend possibilities for all these stateless women. As Oommen states when discussing citizenship in connection with nationality and ethnicity:

> A state can thus be collectively of citizens with certain civil, political and social entitlements. The civil element evolves citizens with the right of individual freedom, the political element provides them with the right to participate in the political process, the social element is essentially a series of entitlements to economic and social welfare.[25]

The stateless three women have been deprived of all these elements. Their individual freedom has been restricted due to limited mobility and their inability to travel outside the country. Their right to participate politically has been denied to a large extent because without official documents they cannot vote in elections. Socially, their opportunities, for example, in choosing their

livelihoods are limited. As Mahajan points out, even when laws provide the basis for equality, and social and political rights are available, many communities still remain marginalised and disadvantaged[26]. He emphasises the importance of democratic and inclusionary practices in all communities, especially from the perspective of fighting against discrimination:

> When religion, race, gender, caste and class were identified as primary basis of discrimination the attempt was to include people of all identities in political domain by extending the same rights to all persons. Subsequently, as formal equality became a reality equality in the public arena became the major concern setting aside legal barriers that stood in the way of including people of all identities as citizens of the polity was an important step in actualising the principle of non discrimination. However, to be an effective reality non discrimination entailed that all public spaces be opened to persons of all categories.[27]

According to Mahajan, rather than focusing heavily on differences, differences should be respected and equality reinforced[28]. In this context, he critically evaluates the first wave of feminism, and in particular 'liberal feminists' who strived for equal rights and opportunities in order to be treated similarly as men. It was only the feminists of the next generation who would focus on women specific issues and women's special rights, highlighting that while equal rights are needed, they are not adequate as such – women need also special rights[29].

Nepal's porous border with India has brought about a large migration in both directions, resulting in many kinds of exchanges in the context of economic as well as social relations[30], including marital relationships. Recent debates have revolved around the provision of citizenship through naturalisation for children who have Nepalese mothers and foreign fathers. In the current situation the Constitution guarantees equality and positive discrimination in the rights of women, which are considered fundamental human rights, but these rights have not been extended to practice in all cases. The government seems to expect that with the provision of citizenship by descent for children through the mother, a large number of foreigners will claim Nepali nationality. The government has justified its limitation of citizenship rights of many stateless persons on the basis of protection of sovereignty and national identity.[31] In doing so, Nepal violates various human rights declarations such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women, which grant women equal rights with men with respect to the nationality of their children.

Besides various legal aspects, what should also be addressed in the current context is the question of belonging. Pfaff-Czarnecka and Toffin associate belonging with one's identity, pointing out that while a person has an identity, at the same time s/he can feel that s/he does not belong to the society 'in the sense of being fully accepted or being a full member'[32]. Belonging is all about where you are and where you come from, and if a person feels that s/he does not belong anywhere, it gives an experience of what Pfaff-Czarnecka and Toffin refer to as 'alienation and rootlessness'[33]. Similarly, Gellner stresses the importance of rootedness and emphasises our

'common humanity' and the right of human beings to be treated equally[34]. Pfaff-Czarencka and Toffin observe that currently the sense of belonging is more 'contested' than ever before, which is due to the increasing complexity of the world, including varied interactions with 'social boundaries and with external forces'[35]. According to them, belonging is important as it relates to 'future political action', and is thus interlinked with dynamics in which inequality and unjust practices can also be challenged[36].

Here, one can also refer to Nira Yuval Davis who interprets belonging in different dimensions of social locations, identifications, emotional attachments, and ethical and political values. For her, belonging means the feeling of being accepted, being part of a community. She emphasises the social location of belonging, that is, issues such as gender, gender, race, class, or profession, which determine a person's position in different hierarchies. According to Yuval Davis, belonging relates to different aspects in the varied dimensions of identity, and she considers belonging 'always a dynamic process, not a reified fixity, which is only a naturalized construction of a particular hegemonic form of power relations'[37].

Conclusions

Citizenship opens doors, provides avenues, directions and acceptance, as well as it creates a bond between the individuals and the government of a country. In the stories of the women analysed in this article, the lack of acceptance has become most evident and visible in the form of lack of citizenship documentation, and it is intimately connected to different forms of discrimination in their everyday lives. Despite the provisions in the Citizenship Act of Nepal, there are many stateless women in the country who will never gain citizenship unless the citizenship application process and some of the provisions that make women – wives and daughters – subordinate to their male family members, will be changed. It is very common, as Pant and Standing have pointed out, that it is women who need to prove their citizenship[38], and as some of the cases analysed here have illustrated, when their male family members refuse to support them, women have to find other, alternative ways to gain legal proof.

These various problems and challenges that women are facing, especially their unequal access to legal citizenship rights demonstrate that women's contribution to the Nepali society is still not recognised, which is mainly due to 'the patriarchal nature of the Nepali society'[39]. Yet, at the same time what we have seen is that women without citizenship are not merely passive victims of their circumstances but they actively continue to renegotiate and redefine their space. As argued by Faulks, citizenship is not compatible with domination whether practiced by the state, the family, the husband – or any other actor that seeks to deny the individual's recognition as an autonomous agent who is capable of self-governance[40]. Faulks importantly remind us that when individuals are treated equally, it automatically reduces 'social tension', and when citizenship includes 'rights, duties and obligations',

it will become a medium for 'sharing' both benefits and burdens of social life[41].

Article 3 (38) of the new Constitution defines women's rights as fundamental human rights and Article 3(16) guarantees the right to dignity. Citizenship should be granted to every person as a birthright, and it should not require any endorsement from other persons. If this becomes possible, women like Sonam, Nisha, and Siya Devi could live dignified lives as Nepali citizens, enjoying their rights and reinforcing their belief that they are all 'different but equal'[42].

Notes

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[3] The Constitution of Nepal 2072.

[4] The Constitution of Nepal 2072.

[5] Nepal Citizenship Act 2006.

[6] Forum for Women, Law and Development (FWLD). *Acquisition of Citizenship Certificate in Nepal: Estimation and Projection.* Kathmandu: FWLD, 2015, 1–18, 17.

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[8] Interview conducted at the Jampaling Tibetan Camp, Tanahun, Nepal, October 2014.

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[19] Kabeer, 'The Search for Inclusive Citizenship', 3.

[20] Kabeer , 'The Search for Inclusive Citizenship', 4.

[21] Kabeer, 'The Search for Inclusive Citizenship', 4.

[22] Kabeer, 'The Search for Inclusive Citizenship', 5.

[23] Kabeer, 'The Search for Inclusive Citizenship', 7.

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[36] Pfaff-Czarnecka and Toffin, 'Belonging and Multi-Attachments in Contemporary Himalayan Studies', xxxiv.

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Interrogating Political Society through Displacement and Vulnerability Risks through Comparative Case Studies in India

By

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Abstract: The plethora of development has superseded the social welfare of the humans in the form of coercive displacement and resettlement in India. It would not be embellishment if we say that historically there has been a breach of trust in the name of development. This article will shed light on historical blunders committed in the name of development, reflecting on displacement and impoverishment along with suppression of public opinion against displacement without proper resettlement. The abuse of the available law on displacement poses a threat to the largest democracy in the world as the nature of the phrase has not been changed much with required amendments done from time to time. Displacement cannot only be analysed from the perspective of costs and benefits as it has also a psychological dimension. The requirement of social analyses and resettlement before displacement has to become the order of the day as people are not against justified and well-planned development. The failure to recognise this is a startling example of a failed civil society but a partially successful political society and subaltern society in providing alternatives to the meta-narrative produced by the state. This article traverses through three important case studies in a metropolitan city of Hyderabad and speaks volumes of disrupted livelihoods due to displacement with added trouble, for example, in the form of limited skills of the displaced. The case studies discuss the misery of the displaced also from the perspective of gender through the prism of politics of development and decision-making processes that are essentially masculine.

Introduction

> 'We must act so that poverty will be alleviated, our environment protected, social justice extended, human rights strengthened. Social injustice can destroy economic and political advances.' – James D. Wolfensohn, Former World Bank President

Cities play a significant role in development, and they continue to attract migrants from rural areas because they enable social and economic advancement. Cities offer significant substantial livelihood options in the form of jobs, housing, and services, and they are important centres of productivity and social development. Over the next 20 to 30 years, dramatic population increases are forecasted to take place in the world's urban areas, particularly in the mega-cities of the Third World. Economic growth will be accompanied by declining agricultural output and employment, and by acceleration in the urbanisation rate. A considerable increase will occur in the number of metropolitan conglomerates with over four million people each. Mega-city formation in many developing countries will be massive and rapid, thus continuing to increase the population glut in many Third World cities.

Although ongoing rural development policies and programs attempt to stem the flow of rural migrants to cities, this flow continues. The social and environmental consequences of urban growth are extremely complex. Urban growth essentially means a reordering of city spaces--improved transportation networks, new industrial estates, new water and sewage systems, and better environmental services. The need for investment in basic urban infrastructure is constantly increasing, requiring important changes in land use. This, in turn, will entail compulsory intra-urban relocation processes. It can be predicted that involuntary population displacement will become increasingly common in India as the country is challenging the developed economies in all frontiers of development. The processes of globalisation and neoliberal reforms in Indian cities have reshaped the physical and social landscapes of India's cities, triggering contestations between the privileged and the dispossessed as all continue to debate the value and danger of development and its rhetoric.

A Buzzword Called Development

The term 'development' envisages a battery of changes; changes for the betterment of the community. It involves the notion of progress, growth, upliftment, and welfare of the collective. Although 'development' is considered an innovative process leading to a structural transformation of social systems, it is always a multifaceted process and not necessarily as progressive as it is portrayed. As Michael Cernea (1996) argues, sometimes 'both history and daily experiences teach us that development processes, be they spontaneous or induced, bring not just benefits. True development is undoubtedly beneficial to very many people. But development changes the status quo and such change usually entails social disruption and undesirable consequences for some population segments'.[1]

The world of the development practitioners has been subject to some shocks in recent times. The instances of weak capacity in the working of the nation state continues to lead to consequences that are diverse but uniformly invidious in their impact. Aggregating the symptoms that have beleaguered development effectiveness in the last half-decade, two major culprits have begun to emerge: the varyingly weak status of institutional capacity all over the world, and the new global shocks emerging from a combination of nationally and trans-nationally originated factors such as unplanned development, displacement, and the food crisis. Institutional capacity can be identified as the ability of state institutions to manage the business of the executive, judiciary, and legislature towards human development ends. The measure of effective state capacity includes how national policies are made, how services are delivered, how markets are developed and justice and security provided, and how the rights of all people are protected. Where a large number of people benefit over time from development, where the economy grows and the society is engaged in democratic process and feels secure; there state capacity can be considered effective.[2] However, often what the state considers development is not regarded as such by the people, and only very rarely does the state make any attempt to understand the people's perspective. This adversely gives rise to unrest during which large scale injustice may go unnoticed because most protests against unplanned development and displacement are not lead by popular civil society personalities.

While India's post-independence economic development policies undoubtedly led to development, a large number of people also had to suffer due to national development. Although much attention has been paid to rural populations, city-dwellers have also faced serious challenges. At the current level of urbanisation in India, urban deprivation levels are very high as adequate housing and infrastructure facilities are absent in many urban areas. The government of India has been incorporating certain programmes to alleviate poverty, create employment opportunities, and encourage planned urban development in its public policy, yet there has been a fast emergence of slums in Indian cities due to increasing urbanisation and the absence of affordable housing. This has raised a number of issues regarding the socio-economic impact of reforms, including the exclusion of a certain category of population from the distribution of the gains of economic growth.[3] 'The existence of a slum means the authorities have failed,' says the World Bank. 'The slum population of the country works out as above 40 million accounting for 14.12% of the total urban population. The States reporting high share of slum population in total urban population are Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Haryana constituting 25.9%, 25.1% and 23% of the urban population respectively. Andhra Pradesh has 5,149,272 population in slums which come up to 25.11% of urban population. Specifically Hyderabad has 17.43% of slum population'.[4] This population has no rights or entitlements and resides in public places.

It is extremely important to understand what a slum means according to the government of India. For the purpose of Census of India, 2001, the slum areas broadly constitute of:

- All specified areas in a town or city notified as 'Slum' by State/Local Government and UT Administration under any Act including a 'Slum Act'.
- All areas recognized as 'Slum' by State/Local Government and UT Administration, Housing and Slum Boards, which may have not been formally notified as slum under any act;
- A compact area of at least 300 population or about 60-70 households of poorly built congested tenements, in unhygienic environment usually with inadequate infrastructure and lacking in proper sanitary and drinking water.

The *Slum Areas (Improvement and Clearance) Act* of 1956 defines slums as 'unfit for human habitation by reason of dilapidation, overcrowding, faulty arrangement and design of such buildings, narrowness or faulty arrangement of streets, lack of ventilation, light or sanitation facilities, or any combination of these factors, are detrimental to safety, health or morals'. It is interesting to note that some of the metropolitan and fast growing cities of India are seen as the engines of growth, as lands of opportunity. At the same time, however, they are places of destitution and despair, places full of hopeless people and 'unwanted subjects' of the state. Usually these unwanted subjects live in the so-called slums. Although slums are seen as a burden from the state's perspective, they can be also considered a vote bank by the political parties. It often seems that the enlightened civil society is not at all interested in the affairs of slum dwellers and that the state only uses them in the context of 'politics of development'.

Why, then, does population displacement take place in urban areas? The answer generally given by bureaucrats and policy-makers is that displacement is due to improvement of infrastructure and development that involves new industries, irrigation, transportation highways, power generation, building of hospitals, schools, and airports. In the political rhetoric, displacement is usually represented as an inevitable effect of the state's development strategy. However, it is not always the case that people become displaced due to absolutely necessary projects, but often many people, especially slum dwellers, are displaced in the name of urban beautification or cleanliness. Unfortunately, time and again the state displaces people and leaves them without resettlement, fuelling the creation of another slum in some other locality of the city.

The critical questions that arise from such involuntary displacement include: Which, and whose, concept of development drives such displacement? Who has been sacrificed, for whom? Where within the judicial system it is possible to anticipate justice as a displaced citizen?

The victims of development-induced displacement are often politically marginalised groups: their views are hardly ever represented in decision-making bodies. Their perspectives and opinions are not listened to, and they become significant only periodically, usually during election time. This speaks volume of what the welfare state has done to them and what they can expect from the state. These groups bear the brunt of everyday inequalities caused by development policies of the state. The empirical

evidence bears testimony to the survival strategy of displaced people despite troubles at every instance. This article explores strategies used by displaced communities to influence events and to soften policies and laws that exacerbate their living conditions.

These are issues that form the bedrock of this article, based on an analysis of three comparative case studies of unplanned development that changed the course of life for thousands of people in the metropolitan city of Hyderabad in the state of Andhra Pradesh in the southern part of India. This article is divided into four parts. It begins with an introduction to the comparative case studies, including an outline of the region where the case studies are located. The second section of the article discusses the cases in detail from a diachronic perspective, reflecting on the situation before, during, and after the displacement.[5] The third section of the article pertinently looks into theoretical aspects of displacement and their link to civil society and political society. The critical examination of both civil society and political society from a displacement perspective and its linkage to the concept of development is established. The last section of the article offers a reflection on the future of the state's development agenda, concluding with some policy remarks in an effort to make the government more sensitive towards the marginalised voices of displaced people.

Introduction to the Field and the Research Cases

Hyderabad is one of six major metropolitan cities in India, located in the Deccan plateau in the southern part of India. With a population of 3,829,753, it is the capital city of Andhra Pradesh.[6] It boasts of a booming information and technology sector. More than one third of Hyderabad's population resides in slums, squats, and other poor settlements. Their contribution to city's economy has been growing strongly in recent decades. In the absence of developed land and a clear policy to address their problems, the poor suffer from many inadequacies in terms of their access to basic urban services. Hyderabad is characterised by a significant presence of the urban poor with a growing poverty profile. While slum settlements have multiplied over decades, the living conditions of the poor have not improved. Environmental decline, vehicular pollution, inadequate basic services and infrastructure in the poor settlements make living in slums very challenging and difficult. Typically, slums are highly populated and scattered across the city and surrounding municipalities. The number of people (according to the 2001 census and the statistics of the Government of Andhra Pradesh) inhabiting them is estimated to be around two million. It is estimated that more than half of these slums are located on private land, with the other half belonging to the government and its various public entities. The poor in Hyderabad slums are vulnerable, and poverty has also a visible gender dimension as poor women are often subject to sexual harassment and domestic violence. In addition to the existing problems, the new trend of demolishing heritage sites and processes of beautification has become threatening factors causing large-scale displacement.

Selection and Brief Profile of the Field

The case studies were selected based on a pilot study in several displaced sites chosen based on the magnitude of displacement. The other rationale behind choosing the cases was to see how people, both with and without property, react to displacement, and equally to examine the role of the state in different urban displacement situations. The first case is the Multi Modal Transport System (MMTS) project which had a devastating effect, displacing 433 families. The case is significant to study as the displaced community lives in a place that has been declared a slum by the Municipal Corporation of Hyderabad (MCH). In this case, the displaced community was able to articulate their demands and enjoyed the support of the ruling political party. They were hence successful in negotiating a proper resettlement package after their displacement.

The second case is that of the extending Information Technology (IT) corridor project that displaced 440 families living in a slum recognised by the authorities. People who had settled there were originally from many different regions of Andhra Pradesh and had been living in the area for more than 25–30 years. This case is very sensitive as the particular displaced community had to go through multiple displacements and has had to live without proper resettlement for almost one and a half year. It is also of high importance due to the fact that the ruling political party clearly used a strategy of 'divide and rule' in managing the displaced population.

The third case concerns the displacement of 11 villages in the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC), which has resulted in the largest number of displaced people in recent times. This case merits a special reference because most of the displaced people who had entitlements were dependent on their lands, which they ended up losing along with their agricultural livelihoods. In this way, this case represents a fitting example of the inhumane policies of displacement and resettlement, dragging people below the poverty line and causing a high risk of further impoverishment. All three cases are unique in nature but taken together, they provide substantial understanding of the dynamics and processes of displacement and resettlement in terms of sustainable development.

Case Study I: The Multi Modal Transport System (MMTS) Project

The Multi Modal Transport System (MMTS from now on) is already functional in the city of Hyderabad at the time of writing (March 2016). A community and settlement known as *Nirankari Nagar* was entirely cleared to make way for a MMTS station now called *Lakdi ka Pool*. The land was located in Survey No. 2, Block. L, Ward No. 83 of the Kairthabad village, admeasuring 21820 Sq. Mtrs. Occupation of the land, which belonged to the government in the name of the South Central Railway, began 30 to 35 years

ago when some families migrated from different locations, building shelters on vacant land on both sides of the railway line.

Demographically, the population consisted largely of people belonging to the Scheduled Caste and Muslims. These illegal settlers were never questioned by any authority, which gave them courage to build small houses apart from thatched huts. The place was of great importance to the settlers as it was located in the heart of city, which enabled them to go to work and get back anytime during the day. The location also allowed the settlers to save large portions of their income in order to upgrade their housing from huts to small buildings. Some early settlers even rented their houses to incoming families. The people in the locality represented many different professions. Some of them were painters, auto drivers, or poster sellers. Others had small shops (daily needs), were involved in kalai work, or working as snake charmers, and so forth. During the course of my research, many of them revealed that they had owned a small portion of land in the rural region of the Guntur district of Andhra Pradesh but due to famine and being unable to pay their debts because of crop failure they were forced to flee to Hyderabad. Within a span of 30–35 years the place attracted more than 500 families. Over 280 families were allotted house numbers by the Municipal Corporation of Hyderabad.

In 2002, a Telugu daily called *Eenadu* carried a news item which spoke about the proposed multi-model transport system, claiming that the people of *Nirankari Nagar* locality had to vacate to make way for construction. This news came as a shock to the people of the locality, as they had not been informed of this project by any authority in advance. The people approached the Divisional Revenue Officer and the Mandal Revenue Officer in order to find the land records and a section of the proposed project. The residents were not given adequate information; they were only informed by the Divisional Revenue Officer and the Mandal Revenue Officer that they had to vacate the locality within three months. The people had no other choice but to approach the court of law, stating that by virtue of having lived in the area for more than 30–35 years they were entitled to be treated as residents. They also asked for the project to be halted.

Realising the magnitude of the situation, the government alerted the officers responsible to speak to the people of *Nirankari Nagar* and ensure them of proper resettlement plans, while insisting that the projected construction could not be stopped. The leaders of the locality were reluctant to believe in the government promises, as they were aware of the fate of several hundreds of people being uprooted every day from other illegal sites within the city. The local leaders had a wide consultation on the ramifications of vacating the place, touching upon promises made in regard to their resettlement by the political class. On the basis of the consultation it became very clear that vacating the locality would mean that the people would lose their livelihoods, and therefore, they decided to unite against any form of displacement. However, the government authorities played a political trick: they asked the leaders of the locality to choose a place for relocation with a caveat that the new location identified should accommodate all the 433

families. The logic behind the government's proposition was that the leaders would not be able to find such a place in a city such as Hyderabad, at least not in any easily accessible locations. As the media was reporting extensively on the incident, the government sought to prove its pro-poor credentials by negotiating with the locality leaders.

The leaders of the locality were in a fix as the situation represented an opportunity, on the one hand, and an unsolvable problem, on the other. They frantically started consulting people who lived in other similar illegal squatter settlements. In 2002, the people of the locality formed an association called the Nirankari Nagar Huts Development Association, which was represented by President S. D. Bhasheer Miya. In the same year the people also filed an affidavit in the High Court of Andhra Pradesh in Hyderabad. The writ was between the District Collector, other officers associated with the project, and the Nirankari Nagar Huts Development Association represented by its president Sri. S. D. Bhasheer Miya. The then Mandal Revenue Officer G. Venkateshwarulu of Khairthabad Mandal filed an affidavit on behalf of the Caveat Petitioners. In the petition it was mentioned that 'The land in T.S. No. 2, Block L, and Ward No. 83 of Khairthabad village, admeasuring 21820 Sq. Mtrs. is a Government land recorded in the name of the South Central Railway. Some unauthorized persons illegally occupied the said land and constructed houses on either side of the railway track. An affidavit said 'The locality was called Nirankari Nagar. It is submitted that the Government of Andhra Pradesh in collaboration with Railway Department has taken up a project titled 'Multi Model Transport System' (MMTS) to meet the traffic requirements of Hyderabad, as there is heavy traffic congestion in the twin cities.'

The affidavit further mentioned that the residents of the *Nirankari Nagar* slum had occupied the land in question and had been living there for the last several years, and that the Government of Andhra Pradesh had decided to shift the residence of Nirankari Nagar, accommodating them in alternative land situated in Survey No. 336 part of the Kukatpally Village and Survey No. 57 part of the Shamshiguda village, Kukkatpally Mandal, the Ranga Reddy District. It also stated that steps had been taken to evict the occupants and shift them to new places. The affidavit claimed that a notice was sent to the residents of the locality in advance, and that notification papers had been produced for the court to allow the takeover of land by the government. The government filed a police complaint against the President of the Nirankari Nagar Huts Development Association, Mr. Bhasheer. He was accused of lending houses for rent and selling some places while claiming that they were his property. He was threatened by the government agencies to force him to withdraw the petition he had filed in the High Court. Due to the authoritative leadership of the supremo of the Telugu Desam Party (TDP)[7] and the then Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh none of the members of the ruling party Members of Legislative Assembly (MLA) could oppose the project. The opposition party of the house, the Indian National Congress[8], did not take any interest in speaking to the people of the locality. The locality was officially defined as a slum by the Municipal Corporation of Hyderabad

(MCH) already in 1989 by the Congress government. The intention behind the granting of a slum certificate was clear as the locality fetched more than 3000 votes. Unfortunately, the representative of the people during that time, Mr. P. Janardhan Reddy, did not show any interest in resolving the problem. If the opposition had been active in this matter, it would have organised protests and stood by the people of the locality. Hence, it is not surprising that from the perspective of the slum dwellers, the whole episode seemed like a conspiracy that was planned by all the politicians together. Surprisingly, the people of the locality found rescue in Mr. Vijaya Rama Rao, a minister then in the TDP government. He promised them proper resettlement while arguing that it would not be possible to stop the project.

On the day of their displacement, based on their consultations with people from several other illegal squatter settlements, the residents decided to go ahead with agitation and to actively resist their displacement. The government was well prepared to face any type of consequences in order to get the project done: it had conveyed the police force along with bulldozers. People cried for mercy, but in vain. Police had taken over the charge of relocating the people and was preparing the place for the project. Realising the situation and the backlash they would receive from the public and the media if it attempted forcible relocation, the District Revenue Officer and the Mandal Revenue Officer (MRO) promised the people that they would be given Rs. 5,000 along with a 100 kilograms of rice. It was also announced that a dinner party would be hosted in the new resettlement colony on their arrival. Several of the residents opted for the compromise. Although quite a few resisted, the government had been able to break their unity and within a few hours all the people were forcibly put in vehicles and shifted to the new locality. The reality in the resettlement colony was very different from what had been promised to them: the residents found only some lemon rice being served to those who had managed to reach the place early, and there was no sign of any compensation, rice, or a party. The MRO and his officials were sitting around a table and allotting the available houses according to the previous house numbers, provided to them by the Municipal Corporation of Hyderabad. At the time of the resettlement, 284 families with registered house numbers in the previous locality were allotted houses but were not given the original housing rights documents but only photocopies. The rest, altogether 146 families, were not given anything. These ousted families had no place to stay in the resettlement colony or in the previous place. This forced many of them to move into other slums around the city.

The Resettlement Colony of the MMTS Project and Consequences of Displacement

The Resettlement Colony is called NTR Nagar and it is situated in Survey No. 336 which is part of the Kukkatpally village and Survey No. 57, part of the Shamshiguda village, Kukkatpally Mandal, and the Ranga Reddy district. The locality is around four kilometres from the main road and can be reached by auto rickshaws and buses. Nearby there are a few other slums, cropped up

illegally because many of their residents were also thrown out from one or the other place. The locality has 433 houses which are built one above the other. The houses in the new locality have been allotted according to the previous registration numbers but a new number has been given to the houses as Ground Floor (GF) and First Floor (FF). The houses are highly congested as they are originally designed for small families: there is enough room only for parents with one child. The NTR Nagar locality has a public transport system which is not frequent and any urgency in approaching the city can be made only through a shared auto. The standard water supplied to the locality can be used only for bathing, not for drinking. A tanker has to supply drinking water separately. The hygiene of the locality has been compromised as there are no drainages: the water from bathrooms and wash areas is left directly on the road. There is no health care centre in the colony. There is one elementary school but it is overcrowded. Although there is a private school nearby, the resettled population cannot afford the exorbitant fees charged.

Some interesting facts emerge when a comparison is made by using the diachronic method. The previous locality had very good transport facilities and bus connections from and to the most important locations in the city. The locality also had excellent water supply from the Manjeera river, which provides drinking water to the entire Hyderabad city. There was also a good drainage system and the locality was kept clean by the workers of the HMC. The resettlement colony, in contrast, has nothing else to offer than a house to stay and live in. The daily wage labourers suffer due to the commuting charges incurred from the resettlement colony to their work places. The children are deprived of school. The women are forced to work as domestic helpers in the neighbouring areas. If the women have the satisfaction of contributing to the income of the family, some of them are, however, frequently abused by their husbands who may, after consuming alcohol, suspect and accuse their wives of immoral conduct at the work place. It is not unusual that the consumption of alcohol increases in communities in the post-displacement phase. The displaced families often suffer from a loss of work and income and from doubled expenditure compared to their previous settlements.

The whole population of displaced people is vulnerable but particularly the women. They are forced to keep up with the stress of displacement at the same time that the level of domestic violence in the resettlement colony has increased. There is a religious angle, too, to the problems faced by women in this displaced community. While most of the Hindu women support their families by working as domestic helpers in households nearby, the situation for Muslim women is often grimmer. In Muslim communities, the women usually support their families either by working with their husbands or by staying at home. The survey conducted during my research reveals that most of the Muslim families in the colony are quite conservative: the male in the family would not want the women to work outside the home, for example, as domestic helpers. Often the women are not allowed to interact with people outside their families even within the resettlement itself. Upon questioning, most men expressed dislike towards the

idea that their wives would work in somebody else's place as the men felt that it would diminish their self-respect.

There are also other kinds of gender aspects and problems in the displaced communities. Due to a lack of resources and anxiety about their future well-being in the new resettlement colony, most of the families surveyed were of the opinion that the education of male children of the family is important but girls are often required to stay at home to work. In many instances, the family is willing to spend some money on the education of their male children as they believe that boys will take care of their parents later whereas girls would not be able to do the same. This is one of the reasons why the female children are usually affected the most in the processes of displacement and improper, unplanned resettlement. Vandana Shiva[9] emphasises that the future of women and children cannot be taken for granted by the authorities. Women can become victimised in many different ways, which is not necessarily due to insufficient and inadequate participation but rather due to enforced but asymmetric participation whereby they bear the cost of development but are excluded from its benefits. Vandana Shiva also demonstrates that in the process of displacement and resettlement women are not usually consulted and their views become neglected. Authorities in charge of relocation processes do not understand the specificity of women's problems in adjusting to a new locality. Even under normal circumstances, the society does not treat men and women in equal terms. The displaced women need extra attention to cope with the changed circumstances till such time that they can be accepted and treated as equals. The traumas generated by displacement are intimately connected with the rights of women and their civil liberties.

Case Study II: The Cyberabad Project

This case study is a clear illustration of how capitalist forces can be an enemy in disguise to the poor. In the spree of constructing the Information and Technology (IT) parks several hundreds of families were displaced. Due to extreme poverty and lack of employment, a large number of people came to the city of Hyderabad in search of livelihood from Andhra Pradesh and neighbouring states such as Karnataka and Maharashtra. They stayed in a place called Durga Bhavani Nagar in the Manikonda village in the Cyberabad division of the Hyderabad city for 15 to 20 years. All the residents were involved in different construction works in and around Gachibowli. As the expansion of the high tech city took place in Gachibowli, a large number of companies showed interest and acquired land from the government of Andhra Pradesh. As a result of this most of the families in the area came under the threat of forced eviction. The land in Survey No. 203 and 210 of the Manikonda (J) village was handed over to the Andhra Pradesh Industrial and Investment Corporation (APIIC). Similarly, some part of the land in Survey No. 203/1 and 210 was allotted to a private company called MR Properties to develop a golf course by the same corporation. A large number of economic migrants from all over Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka had come

and settled in the Manikonda village. There were 440 families making their living by cutting stones, working as construction labourers, and drivers. Ironically, after the inception of companies like Microsoft, Wipro, Infosys, and Polaris the place had generated continuous employment due to the development of infrastructure. The Andhra Pradesh Industrial and Investment Corporation (APIICL) was in the process of extending the land to IT companies.

One important instance changed the fate of the settlers. It was the visit of the CEO of Microsoft, Mr. Bill Gates, in 2004. To impress the IT giant, the Andhra Pradesh government promised to provide land for many more IT companies, as it strived to become the 'best destination' in the IT sector. This resulted in the authorities searching for more land in the nearby localities, including the locality of Durga Bhavani Nagar. The people, being informal dwellers, got the notice to vacate the place within a month. There were two established local leaders among the people who were determined to fight against the evacuation. Due to their opposition, the government again ended up in the dilemma of whether to displace the people by force or to try some other measures. The government authorities used the same old 'divide and rule' strategy that is regularly deployed by the political class. One of the local leaders, Mr. Tirupati, was taken to meet the IT Minister Ms. Sabitha Indra Reddy and he was wooed with gifts and assurance of all the support he required. The tragedy of the story was that after meeting with the minister, the local leader was able to convince a large number of people of the necessity to hand over the land. He reminded them that the people had been living for years on the government land and it had to be now vacated, emphasising that they would benefit from forthcoming resettlement which would provide them with housing and other amenities which they had never dreamt of. The other local leader who was against the eviction was silenced and his opposition was met with police cases and false charges.

When forced eviction took place, people were sent to a village which was ten kilometres away in Vattinagulapally, a place closer to the South Campus gate of the University of Hyderabad. However, the host community did not allow the newcomers to stay. The revenue officials of Rajendra Nagar Mandal found some land for rehabilitating the informal dwellers of Manikonda after a backlash in which both the displaced community and the host community were involved. The land identified was allotted to 440 families on the basis of a list made of informal dwellers in the previous place. The plot allows for 60 yards per family. The government of Andhra Pradesh entrusted this work to the Collector of the Rangareddy District who entrusted it to the Revenue Divisional Officer, and finally it was assigned to the Mandal Revenue Officer of the Rajendra Nagar Division. Ms. P. Sabitha Indra Reddy, the Minister for Mines and Geology, Investment IT&C from the Chevella Constituent Assembly, shouldered the responsibility to resettle the people on the behalf of the Government. The reason behind naming the new resettlement colony as Indra Reddy Nagar was to justify that the resettlement had happened in her constituency and under her leadership. All the people were asked to move to Indra Reddy Nagar located in Survey No. 192 of the

Janawada Village in the Sankarpally Division in the Ranga Reddy district. As the land belonged to the government, the people from nearby villages were upset by the fact that some outsiders were given land 'freely'. The frustration was exhibited on the displaced community and particularly on the women.

After a prolonged struggle and constant reminders sent to the concerned authorities in the form of letters, displaced people were finally provided with some security. The most tragic part of the whole episode was that the displaced people had to spend almost two years in small huts which were susceptible to the elements of nature. As the pressure started mounting from academics working on issues of displacement and resettlement, the government was forced to step in and order some houses to be built for the displaced people. To the consternation of the displaced people, during the new settlement's foundation ceremony, the government came up with a new infrastructural project--the Outer Ring Road (ORR). As the ORR was passing through the new resettlement, many of the people who had been already displaced were displaced again. Only some parts of the land that was left over from the ORR project were given to the displaced people for constructing houses in the resettlement colony.

The Resettlement Colony of the Cyberabad Project and Consequences of Displacement

The resettlement colony Indrareddy Nagar is located between the Janawada and Kolluru villages. The place is near to the Cozy Club, a resort situated next to the resettlement site. It is semi-arid forest area and there has been no human settlement nearby for a long time. The area is far from the surrounding villages. The population of the resettlement colony consists of many different caste groups (Backward Classes and Scheduled Caste) and many different religions (Islam, Hinduism, and Christianity). Compared to the previous location, the circumstances and conditions of the new locality are more difficult, and the resettlement colony only offers them insecurity and hostility.

In this case, the most important impact of the land acquisition is economic, although other impacts are significant as well. The displaced community lost many job opportunities due to the distance they have to travel every day in order to reach their workplaces. In their previous settlement, working women were able to manage their work and household responsibilities more easily due to the proximity of their workplace. In the resettlement colony, women cannot travel more than ten kilometres in order to go to work from the new resettlement because they need to take care of their children as well as their own parents. This has resulted in many people losing their jobs, which has, in turn, resulted in substantial losses in terms of income. The higher travel costs constitute of a loss of Rs. 1,000–1,400 from the total income of the families.

Lack of Facilities

Safe drinking water is not provided to the resettlement colony. There are three hand pumps attached to three bore wells but due to maintenance issues only one bore actually works. Due to the shortage of water, the community has proposed a separate bore well to be built in a nearby village called Mikanagadda. If the plan works out, water could be drawn from the bore well through a pipeline and it could be stored in the overhead tank that was constructed recently. Another major problem is that there are no proper roads in the colony, with people travelling through unclean and unsafe places covered with plants, trees, thorns, and stones. There are also a lot of snakes and scorpions in the area, which makes it difficult to move around after the sunset. Many people have been bitten by snakes but only rarely they receive proper treatment. There is no health care centre in the colony, and it is difficult to go to the hospital due to lack of transportation facilities. Summer is an especially challenging time for people in the colony, who do not have access to clean drinking water, and often are not allowed to fetch water from the nearby villages because of conflicts with the resettled population. This unbearable situation has forced the displaced people to request the leader of the colony to arrange for a tanker to provide them with drinking water. Having to pay extra money for the drinking water is an additional burden on people, who have to struggle in order to earn their daily bread. Due to their continuous efforts they have managed to bring electricity into the colony but it has also created new problems. The electric wires have been left on the ground and have not been provided with poles. Due to the vehicular movements of tractors and other two-wheelers, many wires have been broken and patched up, resulting in short circuits during the rainy season. There are hundreds of children in the colony and already there have been several incidents of hospitalisation due to electric shocks. Unsafe wires lying on the ground may also result in huts being burnt down and people losing their lives.

Transportation is yet another major problem for the people living in the colony. In order to survive economically, many people work extra hours and often return to the locality only after 7 p.m., when it is very difficult to get transportation to distant locations on the outskirts of the city. At times people have been forced to walk all the back way to the colony, reaching home as late as midnight. This leaves women and children restless: as food is purchased with the daily earnings of the male family member, his delay puts the family through anxiety. Sometimes auto rickshaws are willing to drive to the colony even late in the evening for a double fare.

When people become ill and have health problems, reaching the hospital is almost impossible by relying on public transport. One of the major challenges in the resettlement colony is the lack of medical facilities. Although there are more than 439 families and total the population is more than 2000 people, there is no health centre in the resettlement. Generally, the living conditions in the colony are not only unhygienic but also unsafe due to mosquitoes, other insects, and snakes, some of which are poisonous. For example, when a boy was bitten by a snake late in the night, he died due to

lack of transport facilities. This unfortunate incident was followed by violent protests in the resettlement as people were demonstrating their anger and frustration towards the local leaders who had promised them proper resettlement before the displacement took place. The protest was successful as it resulted in an arrangement of two nurses visiting the locality twice a week.

Education is of primordial value and a basic necessity of every society. The resettlement colony of Indra Reddy Nagar lacks a school. Before the displacement most of the children used to go to school. After the colony was displaced, the children had no school to go to. Their future has been compromised. Only very few of the displaced families have started taking the children along and dropping them to a government school on their way to work, and picking them up when returning from work. Many female students do not find it safe to go to schools that offer studies between 8–12 standard as the classes last late in the afternoon and due to the distance to travel back they would reach the colony only after 7 p.m. in the evening. Due to these risks, many families have prevented their girls from going to school as they have become concerned over their safety. Some have started to question whether girls even need education as it involves such high risks and expenditure. After having faced long-term pressure from within the colony, the government organised two teachers to come and teach there. The classes were held in a half-constructed, unsafe building that lacked even the most basic facilities. The experiment did not last for long; the teachers stopped visiting the colony due to lack of transportation and basic facilities such as teaching equipment and drinking water.

Case Study III: The International Airport Project

The International Airport project is the most devastating of the all three cases discussed here as it was the cause of massive displacement in the city of Hyderabad. The government of Andhra Pradesh, under the leadership of the Chief Minister Chandra Babu Naidu during the TDP's tenure (1995–2004), had introduced the first plan for the construction of the airport in 2000. However, it had not received any permits due to the political changes taking place in the state at the time. The TDP lost the elections in 2004 and the Congress Party came to power under the leadership of the present Chief Minister, Dr. Y S Rajashekara Reddy. After this election, the International Airport Project gained the approval of the central government and it started the work through a corporate construction company, GMR. This led to the displacement of the people in the area, once again under the leadership of legislator Sabitha Indra Reddy. The people of all 11 villages were informed through a notice only 15 days prior to their displacement. The people were not able to take any precautionary measures. Sabitha Indra Reddy assured that they would receive proper compensation and resettlement, as most of the people had land entitlements. She also explained the inevitability of the project, making it clear that it was certainly going to take place. In the meanwhile, the people were unable to decide if they would move away or stay back and protest. Most of the people in the affected villages were dependent

on agriculture. They were mainly flower-growers who used to sell their products in the city of Hyderabad. Most of the people with land holdings of two to three acres were able to generate profit, employing ten to twelve people a day.

The whole process of displacement and resettlement was supposed to take place under the special officer of the IAS cadre Mr. Prabhakar Reddy. The district collector of the Ranga Reddy District was also involved. After the given time of 15 days had passed, the authorities came with police forces and ordered the people to vacate the area. However, many people were involved in family functions and rituals that had been already fixed before the notification on displacement reached them. On their request to the concerned legislator, they obtained a grace period that granted them 15 more days to vacate. On 13th May 2004, with more than 500 Special Police forces involved in the process, the people were forced to evacuate and they were shifted away in lorries. Their homes and land had become forcefully acquired.

The difference between this and the other case studies was that in the other two cases the displaced people did not own the land but had occupied a place which was later declared and considered legal. In this case, the people of 11 villages, most of them who owned land, were displaced. The government of Andhra Pradesh had acquired 5,480 acres of land for the purposes of the airport project as a result of which more than 11 villages were affected either fully or partially. Out of the 5,480 acres of land 3,400 acres belonged to private land owners who had Pattas (registered forms or official Land Titles), the other 1,600 acres were considered government land but they had been occupied by the local people who had cultivated the land for 50 to 60 years. The government made it very clear, through the special officer Mr. Prabhakar, that the *Land for Land* policy would not be deployed in the compensation process.

The people of the locality decided to organise a struggle against the government. The caste stratification in the area is typically closely related to alignment with different political parties. For example, the Reddy[10] group people largely support the Congress party, as it is led by a person belonging to the Reddy caste. The BC and SC (Backward Class and Schedule Caste) groups largely support the TDP. Even despite these strong political alignments it was difficult for the people to organise their struggle in an effective manner. Because the compensation policy was problematic and people feared that they would lose all their assets, they decided to start an association of their own. This led to the inception of the Shamshabad International Airport Land Losers Welfare Association (SIALLWEL). It started negotiations regarding the compensation measures, although with a very low note as the officials had made it clear that the *Land for Land* policy would not be deployed in this case. The question of fixing of the compensation for land came in terms of money. The government fixed land prices under different categories: A, B, C, and D. The initial compensation rate of Rs. 2 lakhs per acre was not accepted by the people, and they protested. A district committee was formed, led by the collector, but it was not successful as the compensation rate was not increased. This led to the formation of a state committee. The committee

raised the compensation rate from 2 to 4 lakhs per acre in February and March 2002. The A, B, C and D categories were based on the quality of the land.

Category	Type of land	Compensation
A	Irrigated	Rs. 400,000
B	Semi Irrigated	Rs. 350,000
C	Un Irrigated	Rs. 300,000
D	Assigned Land[11]	Rs. 65,000

The compensation rates were not justifiable from the perspective of the displaced community as the actual value of land was far higher than the price offered by the government. The real land value was up to 60 lakhs per acre. Due to fear of losing everything most people agreed to the compensation offered but at the same time they wanted some of their demands to be fulfilled. Some of the demands that they placed before the government were:

- Employment opportunities to two members of every family.
- Land for construction of their houses within the city area.
- Compensation to be paid at one time.

The Collector of the Ranga Reddy District agreed to these demands. Accordingly, the land assigned for the resettlement was located close to the Shamshabad main road, that is, closer to the airport. The assigned land was also divided into three categories as requested by the people. Accordingly, the revised compensation amounts under the three categories were 1) 80,000 + 30% = 104,000 (wet land), 2) 60,000 + 30% = 78,000 (rainy crops), 3) 50,000 + 30% = 65,000 (waste land).

While the negotiations progressed positively, some new tensions were arising in regard to the land rights in two villages, Kothaguda and Rashidguda. After the survey and the compensation policy were spelt out, an elderly person from the Muslim community argued, on the basis of some old references, that all the land in these villages belonged to him. Some other people also claimed the land to be theirs. This virtually stalled the compensation process and an unprecedented tension prevailed in the villages. The people were confused, fearing that they may not get any compensation if the lands belonged either to the Muslim man in question or to some other people. This led to serious consequences as one of the villagers committed even a suicide due to the confusion over land ownership issues. This was a disturbing incident for the Congress Government as the stone laying ceremony of the project was approaching and it was to be attended by the Indian Prime Minister Mr. Manmohan Singh and the Congress President Ms. Sonia Gandhi. The government feared the reaction of the people as well as the response it would receive from the central government, both of which could result in delaying the project, or even stopping it. The government

swung into action and asked the officials to take immediate action in order to restore the compensation process. For this purpose, a special Government Order was issued, although the case was still pending in the court. The result was that people with lavani Patta[12] were also entitled to a compensation of Rs. 65,000 per acre.

Simultaneously, the debates regarding the site of resettlement colony continued. After several rounds of discussion and strong protests against the plans to resettle the people far away from the city, the government identified a place to come under the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) and fixed 250 square yards of land per family. The locality is six kilometres away from one of the displaced village called Chinna Gollapally, eight kilometres from Galvaguda, seven kilometres from Anantha Reddyguda, and nine kilometres from Seethamma Thanda. The sites were allotted according to the survey numbers, which again excluded certain caste groups from the resettlement colony, causing some tensions during the time of displacement. The displaced people from all the villages requested together for a separate Panchayat, a local governance system that could allow displaced persons to voice their claims. The authorities did not agree to such an arrangement, which caused again some political and social turmoil. Different groups were, however, divided and became even more so after the demand for a separate Panchayat was denied. The land owned by the people who lived closer to the airport had a different market value than the land of those people who lived further away. The Government did not make any such distinctions: the people who lived closer to the airport got 400,000 per acre and the people who lived ten kilometres away also got the same amount of money. The value of land in Shamshabad was approximately 5,000,000 per acre at the time, whereas in another village called Mankul the value of land was below 500,000. Because the government did not take these differences into account, many displaced people were frustrated and dissatisfied with the compensation policy.

The Resettlement Colony of the International Airport Project

Immediately after the displacement, it became very difficult for the people to find a place to stay. Because they had been promised a resettlement site in the so-called 'Airport Colony', most people had accepted the government plans and vacated the project area. The government had also threatened them with the use of police forces if they refused to leave. Currently, more than 550 families from four villages have been allotted sites to stay, and 400 families have built houses in the Airport colony. Most of those who belonged to the Reddy group did not build houses of their own but instead they invested the money in real estate business and rented houses for themselves. Prior to the displacement the typical rent was only around Rs. 1,400 per month. After the displacement occurred it became clear that people from at least nine villages would move to Shamshabad, and the rents went up.

Problems in the Airport Colony

Most of the people displaced due the airport project belong to different kinds of agricultural communities and have gained proper training only in these areas of work. Because most of them are semi-skilled labourers in one particular type of work, their situation is much more problematic than what is the case for the two other displaced communities that have been discussed in this article. Additionally, there are many serious problems in regard to education and health care in the Airport Colony. The education facilities are limited only up to the primary level, that is, for children under ten years. As the government does not provide any public transport facilities in the area, most of the children have to travel to and back from school either by autos or personal vehicles. Since there are no health care services available in the colony, people have to travel to Shamshabad to get treatment even for small illnesses such as headaches and fever.

Problems of Caste and Political Parties

The biggest tragedy of this specific displacement and resettlement process has been that the people have been separated in the name of caste and political parties. As it was mentioned earlier, the displaced people belong to Reddy groups who come under upper castes, Yadavas of Other Backward Class[13] (OBC) and Scheduled Caste[14] (SC). The Reddy groups are in favour of the Congress party and the other group of Backward Class is in favour of TDP. The Scheduled Caste is divided between both the parties. Due to these political differences, the resettlement process also witnessed some major differences. Although the plots were distributed according to the survey numbers, the Reddy caste people did not built houses in the resettlement colony as they would have had to live in the same area with SC and OBC people. Hence, all those who belonged to the Reddy group settled down in a place called Madhura Nagar near Shamshabad.

This is only one dimension to the larger problematic. Another dimension is related to the political parties. When people are divided in the name of political parties, there is no communication between the different groups. For example, the chairman of the Shamshabad Panchayat belongs to the TDP and the OBC people have been favouring him. The Reddy group has had considerable problems with this issue. Although the Reddy group has categorically denied it, there have been several incidents that prove a leaning towards the Congress Party. The outcome of such a situation has been that it has led to disunity among the displaced population, and people have been unable to get benefits that they are entitled to.

Displacement Leading to Vulnerability

Displacement can lead to a high level vulnerability in rural areas but particularly in urban areas where the family ties are not as tight as in the

country side. Vulnerability can be explained, according to Kasperson, as 'the degree to which an exposure unit is susceptible to harm due to exposure to a perturbation or stress, and the ability (or lack thereof) of the exposure unit to cope, recover, or fundamentally adapt (become a new system or become extinct)'.[15] This is clearly the situation faced by the oustees of all the three different cases analysed in this study. All those who were displaced lost their jobs. Whereas previously both men and women used to work and earn bread for the family, in the new conditions women are often not able to work. In the context of my first and second case studies, the displaced people were originally economic migrants who had moved to the areas in search of work. After they had lived in the areas for 20 or 30 years, they were evicted, often very rapidly. Displacement came to them as more or less of a shock, weakening them both physically and mentally. The people who were displaced due to the airport project may be the worst affected, given that most of them lost their jobs. For some, displacement represents also a question of dignity, as they previously might have had several employees of their own, but now they have to accept that they are regular daily wage labourers themselves.

Arguably, the second case study presents the highest level of vulnerability in a resettlement colony of the three case studies. In this case, displaced people have been living without proper housing since their displacement in 2004 and well until the mid-2005. The situation was at its worst during the summer of 2005, when it rained incessantly throughout Andhra Pradesh. Many of the huts, built of wooden sticks and leaves, are so small that a person cannot stand straight inside. People's belongings got washed away along with the huts, and many people had to take shelter in the surrounding buildings which were still under construction. This led to many serious accidents. As people were tapping power directly from the electric poles during the rainy season, many children got accidentally electrocuted.
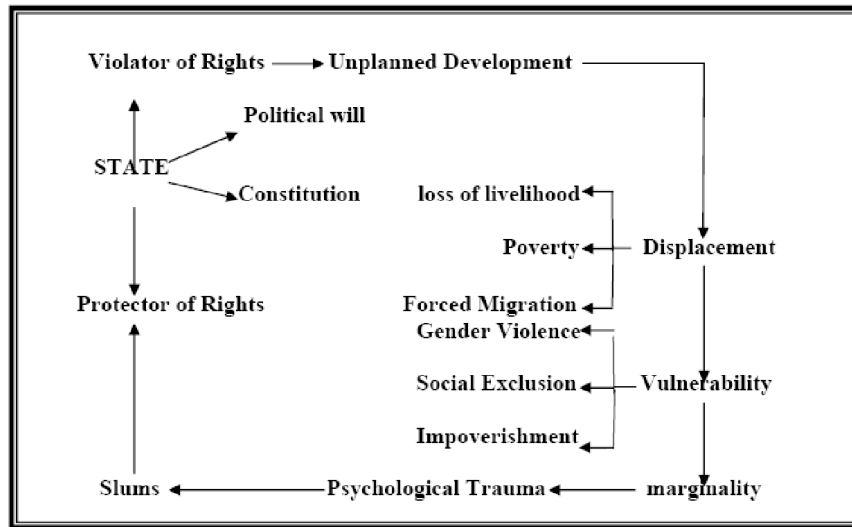
Conclusion

The resettlement colonies are a source of vulnerability for displaced people due to the environmental conditions: resettlement localities are usually very dirty, which makes the residents prone to all type of diseases, and people do not have access to basic facilities or services. Displacement leads to several vulnerabilities such as cultural alienation, dispossession of land resources, human rights abuses, and lowering of living standards.

Due to the crosscutting nature of displacement, no equity related social analysis can proceed without a discussion of gender. Thus, a growing constituency of policy-makers, social advisers, and gender scholars talk of gender mainstreaming and 'engendering' activities. They use gender conceptually and practically to approach a whole array of issues ranging from forced migration to development cooperation and health. In the following section, I look briefly at the long process which led to the mainstreaming of gender – at least at the *de jure* level – in national development.

The tragedy of development-induced displacement is compounded because the affected bear the costs but have no share in the benefits of

development. This is particularly true in the case of women who often become passive recipients in the fallouts. Although the social rights of all affected should be upheld, not enough attention is paid to these issues. Ursula Oswald Spring addresses this by stating that 'human rights and its phases of development do not guarantee minimal life conditions, but reinforce the individualisation process increasing social vulnerability. On the contrary, social rights reinforce networks and create within diverse cultural contexts and Cosmo visions options for resilience building, reduction of social vulnerability, self-reliance and peaceful conflict resolutions'.[16] Often, women become most vulnerable within the vulnerable, as not all communities are safe for women, and it requires time to adjust to a new community. For example, if there are no toilet facilities available in a resettlement colony, men can go out to the field to attend their ablutions but it is not that easy for the women to do the same, especially during the day time. Moreover, women can become very vulnerable if they do not have access to medical care and health services. For instance, a shocking and disgraceful incident took place in the Indra Reddy Nagar resettlement colony during the summer time when it was raining heavily in Andhra Pradesh. A woman called Uma was pregnant and she fell sick due to unhealthy conditions in the colony. As there was no medical care available in the resettlement colony, and it also lacked transportation facilities, Uma did not receive proper treatment and she passed away.

Source: Primary Data

The diagram above summarises certain causes and consequences of displacement through several factors along with different models. However, it cannot demonstrate all factors leading to or resulting from displacement, as there are always a great number of vulnerability risks. The diagram above shows how the state, as a violator of rights, undertakes unplanned development projects that lead to displacement. Displacement usually has

three major consequences: 1) loss of livelihood, 2) poverty, and 3) forced migration, which all lead to different forms of vulnerabilities along with gender violence, social exclusion, and impoverishment risks. When people are either forced to build up new slums or to move into already existing slums, they usually plead to the government to protect their rights by officially recognising the settlements as slums. The process of recognising a slum remains with the state and is always dependent on political will. The process continues as the state time and again comes up with a new development project, and instead of protecting people's rights it violates them, using coercive methods in carrying out involuntary evictions and displacement. This is a vicious circle in which vulnerable citizens are completely at the state's mercy.

When compensation is paid in cash, it often directly disempowers women because they are typically less able to influence decisions within the family with regard to how the money will be spent. All three case studies have one particular outcome in common, that is, any loss of access to traditional sources of livelihood such as land, cattle, or saltpan land ends up marginalising women in the labour market. It is only when land and other resources are replaced that women can at least partially regain their economic status. Women not only suffer in terms of health and nutrition but they also lose the capacity to provide a secure future for their children. By resorting to seasonal migration they have unwittingly denied their children access to school, health care, and other welfare services.

The problem stems from the state's definition of a family, as well as its definition of property for 'public purpose'. In state policies women are not recognised as a separate unit. A widow, an unmarried adult daughter, and a deserted woman will be considered as dependents. According to the official definition of a family, a widow is to be treated as a dependent to the head of the family. A widow's right ceases to exist in the allotted land as the alternative land is allotted to the head of the family: to her son. Another extremely vulnerable group of oustees is people without land, including landless workers. The only legal reparation to displaced persons recognised by the statutes in India today is compensation for loss of assets that are compulsorily acquired by the state for what the state designates as a 'public purpose'. However, a landless family dependent on the acquired land for their livelihood may be severely pauperised by displacement because the family loses its only source of economic survival. This profound vulnerability is not recognised in the law or rehabilitation policies.

At the margins of any society there are always people like the destitute, beggars, women, victims of violence and abandonment, the disabled, leprosy patients, mentally ill, and children deprived of adult care. Usually in rural societies there are some traditional means of social security and support available for some but not all of these groups. These support systems tend to collapse in times of crisis, and those people who are already condemned to the margins are likely to be the first ones to fall by the wayside in the urban displacement scenario. The future of women and children has been taken for granted by the authorities; measures have not been taken to ensure their

survival and quality of life despite displacement. Children who are displaced have no proper education and utter poverty has made them vulnerable. There are also instances of children becoming anti-social and indulging in theft and other crimes. Due to the burden of bringing up children in utter poverty, some parents have even sold their children, especially girls. Trafficking of women and child abuse are very common causes of vulnerability in resettlement colonies and slums. Women and children are vulnerable even in normal circumstances, but during and after displacement their vulnerability increases dramatically. It is evident that more attention should be paid to education. Debates on resettlement and rehabilitation cannot take place in isolation. The hasty decisions of this generation will affect the needs of coming generations. We do not have the right to ruin their future. Development-induced displacement leads not only to many serious social, economic, and political vulnerabilities among the displaced communities but it also affects the society at large. A country can progress only when its development is based on egalitarian ethos, building a conducive and healthy environment for everyone.

Notes

[1] Cernea, Michael. 'Public Policy Responses to Development-Induced Population Displacement', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 31. 24 (1996), 1515–1523. Available at http://www.undp.org/content/dam/aplaws/publication/en/publications/capacity-development/brief-summary-note-on-the-global-capacity-development-campaign/CDG%20Global%20Event%20SB%2022%20March09.pdf , last accessed on 24 March 2016.

[2] UNPD, *Capacity is Development*. 2009. Available at http://www.undp.org/content/dam/aplaws/publication/en/publications/capacity-development/brief-summary-note-on-the-global-capacity-development-campaign/CDG%20Global%20Event%20SB%2022%20March09.pdf , last accessed 15 March 2015.

[3] Sawhney, Upinder. 'Slum Population in India: Extent and Policy Response'. *International Journal of Research in Business and Social Science,* 2:1 (year), 47.

[4] Shivaramakrishnan, K. C., Amitabh Kundu, and B.N. Singh. *Handbook of Urbanization in India-An Analysis of Trends and Processes*. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2005, 107–110. http://www.censusindia.gov.in/Tables_Published/A-Series/A-Series_links/t_00_005.aspx , last accessed 24 March 2016.

[5] A diachronic study or analysis concerns itself with the evolution and change over time of that which is studied. In this case, the comparison is being made by focusing on the pre- and post- displacement phases.

[6] Census of India. 2001. http://www.censusindia.gov.in/Tables_Published/A-Series/A-Series_links/t_00_005.aspx , last accessed 15 March 2015.

[7] A regional political party active in the Indian states of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana in the southern part of India. The party was founded by Nandamuri Taraka Rama Rao on 29 March 1982. Since 1995, the party has been headed by Nara Chandrababu Naidu, the incumbent Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh. The party's headquarters is located at NTR Bhavan in Hyderabad.

[8] Indian National Congress, byname Congress Party, a broadly based political party formed in 1885. The Indian National Congress dominated the Indian movement for

independence from the Great Britain and has formed most of India's governments since the time of independence.

[9] Shiva, Vandana. 'Impoverishment of the Environment: Women and Children Last'. *Ecofeminism*'. Ed. Maria Mies and Vandana Shiva. London: Zed Books, 1996.

[10] Reddy is a caste (community) originating from the state of Andhra Pradesh in southern India. Reddys wield significant social and economic power and are dominant in every part of Andhra Pradesh. They also have strong political hold in Rayalaseema, Telengana and coastal areas. They are generally Telugu-speaking farming community originally from the state of Andhra Pradesh, although there are considerable number of Reddy's settled in the neighbouring states of Karnataka and Tamil Nadu.

[11] The term 'assigned land' is defined by Section 2(1) of the A.P. Assigned Lands (Prohibition of Transfers) Act, 1977 to the effect that the lands assigned by the government to the landless poor persons under the rules for the time being in force subject to the condition of non-alienation and includes lands allotted or transferred to landless poor persons under the relevant law for the time being in force relating to land ceilings.

[12] A certificate that allows a farmer to use government land but not to sell it.

[13] Other Backward Class (OBC) is a collective term used by the Government of India to classify castes which are socially and educationally disadvantaged. It is one of several official classifications of the population of India, along with Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (SCs and STs).

[14] The 'Scheduled Castes' is the legal and constitutional name collectively given to the groups which have traditionally occupied the lowest status in Indian society and the Hindu religion which provides the religious and ideological basis for an 'untouchable' group, which was outside the caste system and inferior to all other castes.

[15]http://www.start.org/Projects/AIACC_Project/meetings/Trieste_02/trieste_cd/Resource_Materials/Kasperson.doc , last accessed on 15 March 2015.

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Brus (Reangs) in Mizoram: The Unresolved Crises

By

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Abstract: The paper looks into the human rights violations faced by the Bru (also known as Reang) community of Mizoram, staying in the camps in North Tripura and Assam. It explains the reasons behind their forced displacement, their conditions in the relief camps and the experiences of those who have returned to Mizoram. The paper also critically reflects on the field experiences and research methods used for this research to elaborate the complexities of studying sensitive contemporary issues.
Key words: Bru/ Reang, Mizoram, IDP, relief camp, return migration, research methodology.

This paper focuses on the Reang (also known as Bru) community of Mizoram, who have been subjected to brutal majoritarian violence at their home state and had left Mizoram in thousands, looking for refuge in northern Tripura and Assam. Based on my field work in their camps and also in Mizoram, I have tried to bring out the complexities of this internal migration together with my reflections on ethnography as research methodology.

The internally displaced persons are the most vulnerable lot as they cannot expect the much needed legal protection from the government in most of the cases as the latter more often than not gives tacit support to the perpetrators of violence on the hapless victims in order to drive them away from their habitual place of residence for some reason or another. The common threats to the securities of the IDPs have been distinctly mentioned in a booklet published by the International Committee of The Red Cross. They are exposed to direct attacks and ill treatment. Their families might get separated in the process of displacement; especially the children may get separated from their parents. The possibility of sexual abuses of the women increases many fold. Whatever little possession they are having may be looted.

They are exposed to health hazards. The IDPs find it difficult to gain access to essential goods and services, including health care. There is also a risk of tension between the host communities and the dispalcees. Presence of militant elements carrying weapons in the relief camps may pose a serious problem. Exploitation of the victims is possible in the form of forced recruitment. And above all the places of settlement earmarked for the IDPs may be unfit and unsafe for them.[1]

In India's North East, internal displacement is often caused by violent clashes between a non-tribal and a tribal group or between two hostile tribal communities. In most of the cases the minority group is driven out from that assumed homeland. Thus a large scale displacement takes place. 'The urge to protect an existing homeland against the homeland claims of the rival group, the projects of creating a new homeland or the fear that one ethnically defined group's homeland or a part of it can be claimed by another are typically the subtexts of these conflicts'.[2]

The paper aims at making an in-depth assessment of the real situations primary in the Reang camps in North Tripura and Assam. The brutal majoritarianism of the Mizo people has displaced the Reangs. These displaced people are deprived of their human rights owing to their tormentors' overbearing strength and the lackadaisical attitude of the governmental machineries both at the places of their original residence and at the places of their refuge. By human rights one may mean those minimal rights that individuals need to have against the state or other public authority by virtue of their being members of human family, irrespective of any other consideration. Such as civil and political rights, e.g. right to life and liberty, freedom of expression, and equality before the law; and economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to participate in culture, the right to be treated with respect and dignity, the right to food, the right to work, and the right to education.[3] Presumably the violations of human rights are most common in case of internal displacement caused by inter-ethnic conflicts. The principal objective of this paper will be to evaluate the status of human rights of the Reang community.

The present study will address this problem in the context of forced displacements of the Reang people from the state of Mizoram. The Reangs in North East India are facing such ordeal since the late eighties of the last century. They are one of the most unfortunate internally displaced persons in this region. In 1997 around more than 43,000 Reangs were forced to migrate from Mizoram to Tripura and Assam and till the turn of the last century, some 7000 of them were languishing in make-shift camps in forest areas of Riflemara, Kanchinalla, Ramnathpur, Kalapahar, Bagcherra, Baruncherra, Chaulkhauri near Hailakandi districts of Assam and Mizoram border. During the same time a large number of Reang families living in Mizoram started arriving in Kanchanpur Sub-Division under North Tripura District since 29/10/1997. The influx continued mainly for about a year covering period from 29th October, 1997 to the end of September, 1998.[4] Subsequently the Reang families moved to the relief camps in Tripura as all the camps were closed down in Hailakandi. These Reang displacees had come in groups. The

largest numbers of Reangs (Approximately 35000) are living in Kanchanpur camps in North Tripura in dismal condition. Reangs were provided shelter in six relief camps in two areas –one on the western side of Jampui Hills in the nearby areas of Dasda –Anandabazar road and on the eastern side of Jampui Hill in the nearby areas of Damcherra-Khedacherra road. Most populous camp is at Kashirampur (Naishingpara). Other camps are Longtharaikami (Ashapara), Hezacherra (all in Dasda Anandabazar road), Kaskau, Hamsapara, and Khakchang (all are in Damcherra –Khedacherra road). Ironically the Indian Government as well as the state government termed these internally displaced persons as 'migrants 'and not as Internally Displaced Persons, in accordance with the definition of UN Human Rights Charter.[5]

Mizoram had always being a state dominated by the Christians Mizos. They had started unleashing terror tactics for unsettling the minority Bru community. Under the impact of large scale violence against them the Brus had to flee their villages and ran for their lives. They took shelter in North Tripura and a small group took refuge in Assam. The Brus were tortured, their properties destroyed and the Bru women were raped. So they had no option but to quit. They became internally displaced. The Mizoram police instead of protecting the Reangs had instigated the Mizo youth to attack them. Even the Government of Mizoram ignored their plight and the officials supported the opinion of the then Mizoram Chief Minister who said that the dissatisfied Brus, from Mizoram can very well stay back in Tripura since originally the they belonged to Tripura.[6]

But what was the reason behind such exodus? The Reang or BRU community was extremely marginalised and persecuted in Mizoram and were deprived of all kinds of social, cultural and in particular political rights. The Reangs in Mizoram had existed in a more or less submissive manner owing to the attitude of distrust shown by the majority Mizo community towards them. For quite some time sporadic communal skirmishes between the two ethnic groups in Mizoram in various forms took place and simmering tension ran strong beneath the apparent calm. After the Lok Sabha Polls in 1996 the relationship between the Mizo and Reang community nosedived. The Mizo National Front tried to induce the Aizawl District election officer to omit a large number of names belonging to the Reang people from the voters list. The Reangs revolted. As a result of this sustained deprivation, the leaders of the community had asked for an 'Autonomous District Council 'and allotment of one legislative seat exclusively for them, from the Mizoram Government. The demands were forthrightly dismissed by the later and the majority Mizo Community started intimidating and threatening the Reang people per say. Moreover an alleged murder of a Mizo Forest Guard by the Reang people created an acute conflict situation. This led to the attack on the Bru community under some pretext or other. Even ladies belonging to that community were not spared. Rape of underprivileged Reang Women was quite common in Mizoram.

Research Methodology

This particular academic endeavour was based on qualitative research and it involved field study as the mode for collection of data. The entire structure of this field study started with the selection of the setting. Kanchanpur in north Tripura was the spot where the displaced Bru people were residing in the relief camps. After long correspondence with the Government officials in Tripura the researcher could get the formal permission to visit the relief camps situated therein. For gaining access to the site a little bit of persuasion became necessary for convincing the Bru leaders about the objective of this research. Every possible effort was made in presenting the investigator to the community as a researcher and to make him acceptable to them as one of the sympathisers to their cause and that he had a definite role as a researcher for collecting information about this critical problem. After establishing himself as an acceptable academic fact-finder the investigator proceeded to take down field-notes and that was coupled with constant interactions with the respondents.

Our experience as researchers, working on the problem of internal displacement involving the Brus of Mizoram was comprehensive and enlightening. Initially, it may be pointed out that field research of this kind involves non-random selection of restricted number of subjects in a given settings. It is based on the fact that the researcher has to concentrate on areas where displaced respondents are putting up. These units are much less amenable to probability sampling techniques. The researcher in this case had to rely on certain specific areas of Kanchanpur subdivision of north Tripura where the Bru people were placed in the relief camps. The camps were situated in the hilly terrain there. The Bru (Reang) displaced people were provided shelter in six relief camps in two areas –one on the western side of Jampui Hills in the nearby areas of Dasda –Anandabazar road and on the eastern side of Jampui Hill in the nearby areas of Damcherra-Khedacherra road. Most populous camp is at Kashirampur (Naishingpara). Other camps are Longtharaikami (Ashapara), Hezacherra (all in Dasda Anandabazar road), Kaskau, Hamsapara, and Khakchang (all are in Damcherra –Khedacherra road).

The primary method of data collection in field research is observation. Subsequently the we had turn to other data sources such as interviewing and analyzing personal documents. Field observation involves direct observation in natural settings. As a result it is less structured than scientific observation. In this particular academic endeavour efforts were made to use all of these techniques. All the camps were visited in order to observe the ground situations of the relief camps of the displaced people. As everyone knows, observations are of two types; participant observation and non-participant observation. In the later case one almost has to act like an eavesdropper. It is like observing the subjects without their knowledge. The researcher took an account of the actual situations in the relief camps and the material amenities those were made available to the dwellers, by the government. The quantum of relief and ration could be assessed from a

distance. However primarily the investigator depended on participant observation and interviews with structured and unstructured schedules.

Our initial task was to encounter the gatekeeper. The Tripura administration had introduced us to the office bearers of Mizoram Bru Displaced People's Forum (MBDPF). The Secretary was Mr. Bruno Msha and the President was Mr Swaibunga. Initially they were reluctant to open up. It is an important skill that a researcher has to master in befriending the gate-keeper. Else the entry to the group of victims would become very difficult. In fact chances are there that the gate-keeper would become somehow apprehensive of the motive of the researcher. In this case that part was taken care of as we were invited to visit the relief camps to gather first hand information.

Voices from Kanchanpur

Reaching the camps under the Kanchanpur sub-division, we had to approach the officials at the MBDPF office. They were asked to call the Bru families to come to the office through the public announcement system. It was instantly decided that some 50 respondents would be selected on the basis of purposive sampling to ensure the equal representation in terms of sex, age and place of residence (prior to their displacement). The quota sampling technique was also applied to ensure equal gender representation. It was assumed that the Bru women were more exposed to ethnic discrimination by the Mizo community than their male counterparts. The first leg of the visit started with the Naisingpara camp which happened to be the largest of the relief camps. On the first day the interviews were conducted on the basis of a more or less structured interview schedule. The Naisingpara exercise continued for three consecutive days. Subsequently visits were made to the Ashapara camp. The same kind of sampling technique was adopted. However apart from the usual interviewing method, one Anganwadi School meant for Bru children provided us valuable information. Another opportunity was availed to establish personalised contact with Bru ladies through the Anganwadi teachers. Visits to other camps in Dasda Anandabazar, Kaskau, Hamsapara, Khakchang and Hezacherra required long and arduous journeys. Three days were earmarked for each camp visit. The approaches to the relief camps on Damcherra – Hezacherra road, were particularly onerous. We had to climb down hill with much physical effort. The experience we had gained throughout our interactions with the camp dwellers was remarkable. For instance most of the respondents drew our attention to the recent incident of fire in Naishingpara relief camp which virtually gutted most of the huts of the hapless Bru people. They narrated their stories of the ordeal and pointed out the late and insufficient responses on the part of the Tripura Government in handling the crisis. One lady started crying while stating that she had to spend ten consecutive nights with her little children and a new born child under open sky till one NGO provided them with some resources to the victims. Another old lady told the us that she had to witness the death of her husband and her daughter whose charred body she could hardly identify. In all the camps in

Kanchanpur the huts were in pitiable shape. Large families were forced to share one room having only one bed. Two pieces of rug was given to each family to fend themselves from the stinging cold. Many of the children did not have their names enlisted in the relief list and were deprived of them of any kind of ration. In some cases adults carried cards for the minors as the data sheet was not updated. As a consequence they could receive only a small portion as ration against their names. The respondents who belonged to Naisingpara, Ashapara and Kaskau camps were extremely vocal about the failure of the Tripura Government to provide drinking water to the camps. Some of them took me to some waterholes near their camps from where they had to procure their water on a regular basis. As it is the camps are situated on remote areas and on the top of that the sources of water were out of easy reach of the dwellers. Those so-called ponds or waterholes were at the bases of the hill tops where relief camps were situated. The Reang IDPs had to climb down nearly 180 to 200 feet to get a bucket of water. The process involved great risk, particularly during rainy season. The government made hollow promises of solving the problem by sinking tube wells in and around the camps and they were never kept. In some camps there were a couple of tube wells but they were either non-functional or tended to dry up more often than not. Repeated requests from the Reang leadership yielded no results.

As has been pointed out earlier, we had to constantly adopt our methodology to suit specific situations. After the interviews were over, a house to house visit became imperative for assessing the ground situations in each of the camps. The most effective mode was participant observation. Here I had to share long hours with the inmates in an area inhabited by them. Informal interaction with the respondents would ensure that the observer would become an accepted member of the group or community. However participation is a matter of degree. Yet it is difficult to imagine full comprehension without heavy dose of participation. In this case the researcher knew about these various settings because of his activities as a participant. In fact I had spent almost 11 hours each day in the camps (from early morning to late evening). As an observer I could actively associate myself with the Bru leaders and Bru families and shared their experiences from a close quarter. The hardship, the Bru camp dwellers were undergoing was shocking and we could make the ground level assessment of the extent of the Tripura Government's assistance to the displaced Brus. House visits and sharing of food with them established deep rapport with them. The leaders went out of the way to provide information about their plans to sustain their movement for return. They also provided all the documents containing their correspondence with both the State and Central Government. Another extremely effective method for data collection was the case study method. Long conversation with the victims provided in depth knowledge about the brutal atrocities that they were exposed to prior to their displacement. Slowly the individuals, particularly the women victims became vocal about the stories of their ordeals without any inhibition. In fact maximum amount of information about pre and post displacement situations could be gathered through case study method. Exhaustive information was obtained from the

Reang IDPs through case study method. A lot more information was available about situations leading to the forced migration of the Reangs. A middle-aged lady Basmati who happened to be a Vaishnavite said that she fled form Falcon area of Mizoram along with the fellow Brus. Her house was burnt down before her eyes and his sons and grandsons were mercilessly beaten, however she never protested or lodge any complain to the local police station. Instead she ran away without any of her belongings, and the entire family crossed over to Tripura, and took shelter in Anandabazar Relief camp. In Mizoram till the conflict broke out she could live in her village. She possessed chickens and pigs and had an orange orchard of her own. She lamented that though she felt claustrophobic in Mizoram yet she missed her village. Another Bru lady named Soninorum said she was forcibly converted to Christianity as the local Mizo leader told her that else she would be driven out. Originally a Hindu she was compelled to go to a Church situated in a far off place. However this conversion could not save her from the wrath of the Mizo youth. Her wooden house was burnt to ashes. In the entire Nathiazole village was torched. She fled with others leaving behind a small rice-mill she possessed.

Nazirung, a 45 year old person used to live in Khanthuang village. He said that for a long time the Mizo police kept on threatening them. He was a jhum cultivator in Mizoram. His house was set on fire and every little thing he possessed was destroyed. All local Bru young men were roughed up and he had fled with his family and had reached Toiring River and the forest near it. They had to spend four nights in jungle without food before crossing over to Tripura. While going by the account of the rest of the Brus certain common trends were noticed, behind the politics of displacing the Brus. Thalyiti, a 48 old year lady pointed out that the Mizos were not only happy seeing them fleeing, had also wanted to instil fear in their mind so that they never dare to come back to Mizoram again. Her husband was repeatedly beaten by the Mizo people though he was leaving Mizoram. Her appeal to them was ignored, and only an intervention by the village Mizo leader did save him. Similarly the lady named Ranobati was looted as she was crossing over to Tripura. Bironjoy, a 75 year old man complained about persecution by the Mizos regarding religion. All his religious scriptures were destroyed by them. A reasonably well-to-do lady by their standard, Ms. Damayanti had a shop in Mizoram. She was advised by some Mizo elderly men to run away from her place but she did not pay heed to that. Then her shop was taken over by some local Mizo strongman. Even her betel nut trees and teak wohd garden were captured. Vanlalringi, 32 years and Christian by faith was raped by drunken Mizo people in her village. Her pets were taken away and were devoured by them on the same night. Mr. Behra narrated about the violent riot that broke out after a story of an alleged murder of the Mizo Forest Guard was spread. He said that even a single Bru house was not spared. So they ran for their lives.

Mrs. Bruiksom a 35 year old lady gave an exhaustive account of the types of torture the Bru families had to face in Mizoram. As a jhum cultivator her ordeal started when the land was forcibly taken away by the Mizos with the help of the police. Domesticated animal were captured by them. She soon realised that the voters' 'list was tampered with and he found that the name of

his own and those of his neighbours were missing. She could also see that in a nearby village discrimination against the Brus was clearly evident in order to put pressure on the Brus to get converted to Christianity.

The event narrated by Mrs. Bandalruati was even stranger. She too had left behind her betel nut garden in Mizoram. According to her, she was hooted out for a strange reason. There was a tussle between some Assamese persons and the Mizos in a Bru house near Mizoram-Assam border. The Mizos alleged that the Bru family had helped the Assamese. Hence they should have no right to stay in Mizoram. Then they started torturing the lady. She had to flee. Particular care was taken about about engaging into long conversations with the Bru leaders on chat sessions in an informal atmosphere. They revealed some of the most critical political rudiments involving inter-ethnic relationships in Mizoram. Even engaging into group chat sessions often led to agitated conversation depicting the futility and hollowness of the government promises about their assumed rehabilitation or return.

I realised that some exhaustive interactions with the Tripura Government officials were also extremely important for obtaining information about the other side of the story. It was necessary to find out what kind of problem the government was facing in handling the problem of displacement. In fact the cash-strap state of Tripura had an unenviable task of addressing the problem. Long conversation with government officials in charge of the relief camps were carried out to find out about the kind of steps the government was contemplating in putting pressures on the central government as well as the Mizoram Government for taking the Bru families back to Mizoram. Chatting sessions with local journalists brought out certain underlying facts involving the problem. Political leaders mostly remained tight-lipped and non-cooperative.

The second part of this research endeavour involved gathering of information about the attempted return process. This also can be divided into two parts viz; process of return and post return and rehabilitation. After much convincing the authority arranged for a visit to the point from which this exercise started. In this case it was the Kaskau relief camp. After overcoming the blatant non-cooperation by the Tripura government officialdom we arrived at the spot. There had been a cloud burst that day. It was raining heavily and the Bru families which were to return to Mizoram were getting totally drenched with all their belongings. However I got an opportunity was availed to interact with the Mizoram Government officers (One of DC rank) as they had come down to Tripura border at Damchhera to take back the Bru IDPs. Initially they were reluctant to talk but gradually they did open up. Another version about the problem was received. They put the matter in an entirely new perspective altogether on the occasion. The interviews conducted on the families which were going back to Mizoram in 20 cars allotted to them. It was based on purposive sampling. Around 12 families were interviewed where both the spouses were interviewed separately. The selection was based on age and types of destination.

Voices from Mizoram

New methodology was adopted for obtaining data in post-return situation. The second part of the field study was undertaken in Mizoram. Effort was made to reach out to the Bru families which returned to Mizoram from Tripura and which were living in facilitator (transit) camps in Mizoram. It was an extremely difficult job to visit those places owing to horrible road conditions caused by heavy downpour in the month of September-October. However by overcoming the hardship successful attempts were made to select four facilitator camps in Rengdil and Damdiai for interviewing the repatriated families. The facilitator camps were situated down the slope at the bottom of the hills. That made the visits further difficult. With much effort we could climb down the slope and reach the site. In each camp five families were chosen on random basis. In this case both the spouses were interviewed with a structured schedule. Initially we were facing language problems. After a while, a local Mizo gentleman came forward to visit us. He translated their words into broken English and Hindi. After this exercise a personal chatting sessions were held with each of the four camp leaders by turn. Discussions over a few cups of tea were very rewarding. It helped the investigator to carry out a heart to heart conversation with the Bru families. The case study method too became quite handy especially in cases of female respondents. They by that time stopped considering us as a government spies. Most of the camps were actually situated in community schools meant for the Brus. However a visit to camps in Tuipuibari could not take place as the road condition was atrocious and the car carrying us got stuck at the very beginning of the journey.

For obtaining information about the Mizoram Government's perception about this process of repatriation it was decided that senior government officials would be interviewed. Accordingly I fixed up an appointment with the District Commissioner of Mamit. At the outset the Government Officer refused to talk assuming that I was a journalist. After he became aware of my identity as a researcher he opened up. It was more of a spontaneous narration by the DC and he had provided exhaustive answers to all my queries.

A detailed interview with the most important Bru leader in Mizoram Mr. Elvis Chorkhy was conducted by me. He differed with the existing Bru leadership in Tripura camps. He sounded more rational and politically matured. A two hour long interview revealed the real problems associated with the repatriation and the design of the shrewd Bru leadership to scuttle the process altogether. The entire interaction enabled me to check the veracity of the statements made by the government officials in Mizoram. Mr Chorkhy had pointed out how the Bru leadership in Tripura were trying to misguide the Bru families in order to retain their hold over the Bru community and to enjoy the privileges which they have managed for themselves.

In order to assess the political mindset of the Mizo civil society about this Reang (Bru) problem I engaged in long conversation with the officials of

YMA (Young Mizo association) and the office bearers of MZP (Mizo Zirlai Pawl). The YMA people were rather too hostile to the Bru community as a whole and were virtually reluctant to take back the Bru families from Tripura. The student leaders from MZP were very vocal about this problem. They were putting a lot of conditions before the repatriation restarts. The methodology here was based on purposive sampling and structured interview coupled with separate chatting sessions.

In should be acknowledged that no methods were used in this project in their perfect form. They were modified to suit the need of the research. However the collection of data was very rich in character and the process had widened the research experience of the researcher.

Problems of Research Methods in Field Study

Any researcher engaged in field study as a mode of qualitative research for the study of forced migration, should remember the possible problems he or she may have to face. The first involves the obstacles we may have to face in gaining an access to the research site. Political or otherwise resistance offered by the powerful block that is causing the migration may pose serious problem for the researcher.

The next major problem that a researcher may have to face is related to the remote location of the site. In some cases the setting may be in an inhospitable terrain. It may be extremely difficult for a common person to reach there. Even violent strife between the communities may make things critical for travelling. For instance, I had to spend quite some time travelling from Agartala to Kanchanpur, where camps were situated. From Kanchanpur Sub-divisional Head Quarter, the camps were far off. Most of them were situated in inhospitable hilly terrains. The journey undertaken by me was hazardous to say the least. This brings us to the third problem in field study. The third problem a researcher may encounter is that of language. There are chances that the language spoken in the site may not be known to the interviewer. I had to take the help of a local Reang gentleman who virtually translated each sentence spoken by the Bru respondents from Kobru to Bengali and broken English. Only handful respondents could speak Hindi and Broken English. The meaning of certain terms in Bru often widely varied. Even the local Reang gentleman faltered. After several attempts commonly accepted meaning of those terms could be established. Some of the respondents particularly in Tripura and Assam could actually understand Bengali and could speak as well but somehow they were unwilling to converse in Bengali. When enquired they pointed out that they hardly spoke Bengali lest they were mistaken as local Brus and were deprived of the rations meant for them. They could communicate however with the local people in the market place.

Another problem that may crop up in field research on forced migration study is the undue interference of the authority which had provided shelter to the forcibly displaced persons. In this case the researcher had to withstand the presence of a government official during the interviews

conducted by him. Special tact had to be adopted in order to avoid the control effect of such unwanted presence. The Tripura government officials were very keen to prove that they have always provided enough resources to the relief camps which stood contrary to the facts. So I had to be cautious and verify everything as per the MBDPF official documents in order to ascertain the fact. In the process the danger of alienating the respondents was also much there. The Bru camp dwellers thought that subsequently Government officials would admonish them for stating unpleasant facts. It took several rounds of chat sessions to eradicate such misplaced fear.

Notes

[1] http://www.ifrc.org/Docs/idrl/1266EN.pdf. ICRC, June 2010, 6. Last accessed on May 30, 2016.

[2] Baruah, Sanjib. *Durable Disorder: Understanding the Politics of North East India.* New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2005, 197-198.

[3] Universal declaration of Human Rights http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/ accessed on 12 May 2016.

[4] Dutta, Subrata Kumar. *Uprooted Reangs: Strangers in Their Motherland* New Delhi: Akansha Publishing House, 2005, 42-43.

[5] The UN Guiding Principles On The Internally Displaced Person says '……internally displaced persons are persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, or in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflicts, situations of generalised violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an international territory'. http://www.ifrc.org/Docs/idrl/I266EN.pdf. last accessed on 30 May, 2016.

[6] Bhaumik, Subir. 'India's North East: Nobody's People in No-Man's Land'. *Internal Displacement in South Asia.* Eds. Paula Banerjee, Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury, Samir Kumar Das, New Delhi: Sage, 2005, 163.

NOTES FOR CONTRIBUTORS

Articles submitted for consideration of publication in REFUGEE WATCH should be around 5000 words. Book reviews can be around 1000 words and review articles can be around 2000 words. Articles will have endnotes and not footnotes. Endnotes should be restricted to the minimum. Please refer to www.mcrg.ac.in for a details style sheet. Round-tables can also be proposed for publication. Enquiries about possible submissions are welcome.

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