

Responsibility to Protect:

Questions of Race, Religion, Resource and the Unspoken Fourth

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In the April of 2010 Jan Brewer, the Governor of Arizona signed a bill that proposed that for migrants, the failure to carry immigration documents is a crime and the bill gave the police broad powers to detain anyone suspected of being in the country illegally. The bill was clearly aimed at the “illegal” entry of the growing Hispanic population in the United States of America. It was also alleged that both the “proponents and critics alike said that this bill was the broadest and strictest immigration measure in generations.”¹ But the question remains: how were these migrants to be identified? The answer one can presume is: but of course migrants will look different and act differently. So in the wrong place and at the wrong time any non Caucasian can be branded “illegal” unless proven otherwise? Micky Hammon, the Alabama House of Representatives’ Republican majority leader allegedly asked his fellow legislators to draft a bill that will so terrify the Hispanic population that they will themselves leave. “This bill is designed to make it difficult for them to live here so they will deport themselves,” said he.² A pro immigrant activist Mary Bauer, the legal director of Southern Poverty Law Centre in Montgomery Alabama bemoaned: “Tens of thousands of people have left, and the people who remain are completely terrorized by this law.”³ The Hispanic population of the state, it is said, were dreadfully frightened. This bill clearly made suspect of anyone who seemed alien. This was not the first effort to control immigration on the basis of race and neither will it be the last. In this paper I contend that both citizenship and migration rests on a triad that was constructed through the axis of race, religion and resources and gender remains the unspoken fourth. So migration and forced migration studies become meaningless if these extremely volatile issues are not considered in their proper perspectives. Race and religion create the alien body that is then forced to move and cross borders. But this very act of crossing borders can also create further borders as SB 1070 of the United States of America proves particularly in the context of Arizona. Therefore, without understanding the ramifications of race, religion, resource and gender one cannot understand forced migration and such analysis fail to give forced migration studies its proper credence.

Race and Belonging

Forced migration is a fairly recent field in pedagogy. It began in the global north after the Second World War as refugee studies. As it became clear that modern state formation was often accompanied by large scale population displacements resulting in large population groups becoming refugees suddenly there was an upsurge in interest on who these people were. When it became evident that these people were racially and perhaps even by religion different this population movement came to be recognised as a crisis. What was ignored was the knowledge that population movements happened in all historical periods and not especially during and immediately after WWII. But forced migration in the context of the known history of Europe were largely movements of white people so it was never considered as a problem or crisis. But the end of colonialism witnessed partitions that often went hand in hand with hordes of people moving in the global south who were non-white. Many of these people had aspirations to move to the global north because they correctly associated their marginality with colonial rule that made race the bedrock of acquisition of benefits such as citizenship, power sharing and

attainment of material benefits and resources. So countries in the global north marked such movements as crisis that necessitated policies and laws that gave the authority to respective states as to who should be taken and who shunned. Because more people were stopped from entering the northern borders policies and laws were formulated and the hordes that were moving were homogenised as faceless, nameless mass and in no way were they humanised in the narratives because the moment they appeared as individuals their claims for rights and resources could not be legitimately ignored. At the centre of resource sharing was the question of citizenship and who belonged was a conscious decision made by the ruling elite. Those who were considered as unworthy of being recognised as a citizen were either to be tolerated as a precarious group who might provide cheap labour or they were to be forced out joining the ranks of the “nowhere” people.

According to social scientists such as Manuela Boatca and Julia Roth, “an entire Occidental tradition of citizenship theory viewed citizenship as a modern, progressive institution that helped overcome particularities of unequal social origin.” But contrary to that claim western scholarly tradition makes it obvious that, “the institution of citizenship has developed in the West through the legal (and physical) exclusion of non-European, non-White and non-Western populations from civic, political, social and cultural rights.”⁴ Citizenship from the time of Max Weber was posited against the institution of slavery and institutionalization of citizenship was portrayed as a progress from bondage to freedom. As an institution citizenship was considered as an equalizer and a paradigmatic shift from the spectrum of social hierarchies at the end of which were the slaves. This was highlighted even more in the colonial times when aliens were denoted first and then it was indicated who could be a citizen.⁵ Race, religion and resources were the three pillars on which citizenship was perched. In the case of the colonizing countries where modern capitalist world order was in the making, there questions of resources became a key question for acquiring citizenship. But in the colonies it was often race and religion that was privileged and resources was usually the third signifier of citizenship. For example in the case of a French colony Saint Domingue, where there was a revolt of the enslaved resulting in the liberation of the slaves in 1794, the question of citizenship was hotly contested between the white settlers and the native mulattos. Even though the contribution of the former slaves dominated the rhetoric of freedom but notions of colour took precedence over property when the question of citizenship was decided. Although many mulattos were property owners it was the white population that was privileged when citizenship was awarded.⁶

In the United States of America too the question of who should get the material and ideological benefits of citizenship was intensely debated. Questions of citizenship came up at a time when the African Americans, largely recently liberated from slavery, were moving into northern and western cities in the United States from the rural south and the country as such was facing an influx of migration from Europeans who were not quiet of the same group of people who had migrated earlier. According to some social scientists it was a time when “the category of ‘white’ was subject to challenges brought about by the influx of diverse groups who were not of the same Anglo-Saxon stock as the founding immigrants”⁷ The African Americans created a major hurdle in denoting who could be a citizen because for most they were markedly the alien. This provided scholars a particularly rich topography for the examination of the dynamics of racialization. But according to iconic black writer Toni Morrison “blackness” was both a hurdle and a harbinger to creative imagination on the question of who belonged. “Black slavery enriched the country’s creative possibilities. For in that construction of blackness and enslavement could be found not only the not-free but also, with the dramatic polarity created by skin color, the projection of the not-me. The result was a playground for the imagination. What rose up out of the collective needs to allay internal fears and to rationalize external exploitation was an American Africanism - a fabricated brew of darkness, otherness, alarm, and desire that is

uniquely American”⁸ However that American view of “otherness” when juxtaposed with a sense of “alarm” created vulnerabilities that could be consciously exploited for ages. The legitimisation of hierarchies created out of such attitudes made American democracy, not exceptionally so, premised on constant creation of minorities who were kept out of equations of power sharing.

While the African Americans were decidedly the vulnerable but still they were accommodated within the American mindset. They entered the American homes albeit as domestics but at least found a space in the American imagination. As early as in 1905, more than single black women in the city of New York were domestic workers. Most of African American migrants moved to big cities such as New York, Philadelphia, Boston etc.⁹ Although they were far below in power hierarchy their presence within white American homes saved them from invisibility and complete subjugation. In WEB Duboi’s seminal work *The Philadelphia Negro* we come to know that these former slaves were not just tolerated but rather encouraged in the white American homes. About one “coloured” domestic help the employer commented that: “Our experience of them is that they are infinitely cleaner than the white Irish, both in their work and personally; they are more self-respecting and better mannered—more agreeable in manners; indeed, I have found them capable of the very highest cultivation of manner.”¹⁰ Perhaps even more than “blackness” as Toni Morrison puts it, the fear was even more palpable about migrants aliens. From Du Bois exposition one gets some insight into how the Irish migrant was viewed. But the Irish were almost white.

Very little can be learnt about the non-white migrant groups in the United States in the early nineteenth century, which was a high point of migration to the free world. Around the 1850 Chinese peasants were coming to United States in fairly large numbers. They were engaged as miners and railroad workers and faced tremendous repression. One legal analyst discussed how the “Asian” migrants led to the concept of “ineligibility to citizenship.” She said that such a construction was applied, “to all Asians, justifying and perfecting their exclusion from imagination, and that completed ‘Asiatic’ as a peculiarly American racial category.”¹¹ About the Chinese migration in particular, a migration that ultimately necessitated the construction of the “Asiatic,” the Governor of California, Leland Stanford in his inaugural address in 1862 announced that:

...the settlement among us of an inferior race is to be discouraged by even legitimate means. Asia with her numberless millions, sends to our shores the dregs of her population. Large numbers of this class are already here; and, unless we do something early to check their immigration, the question, which of the two tides of immigration, meeting upon the shores of the Pacific, shall be turned back, will be forced upon our consideration, when far more difficult than now of disposal. There can be no doubt but the presence of numbers among us of a degraded and distinct people exercise a deleterious influence upon the superior race, and, to a certain extent, repel desirable immigration.¹²

The troubles faced by the Chinese workers were stupendous but that history is all but obliterated. One way of unearthing knowledge about minority groups especially those that have been moving is through acquiring knowledge regarding their resistance to persecution. Much of this understanding came from the field of gender and labour studies. But little is known about the resistance, if any, that was surmounted by the Chinese railroad workers. Ranabir Samaddar writes that:

...very little of the resistance of the Chinese labour except the famous strike in 1876, when on 25 June the Chinese workers left their grading work along a two-mile stretch on

the eastern Sierra slope and went back to their camp. They demanded \$40 a month instead of \$35, and a reduction in hours. A workday on the open Sierra lasted from dawn till dusk; the Chinese labourers wanted to work no more than 10 hours daily. They also asked for shorter shifts in the cramped, dangerous tunnels. The company bosses responded with stopping food supply at the heights and deployed white strongmen¹³

From these writings it is clear that race dominated both the construction of the citizen and the construction of the migrants in the colonial period.

Citizenship: A South Asian Problem

If one looks at the question of citizenship from the perspective of South Asia once again the issue of race rears its head. When one looks at India's northeast in the colonial period the issue becomes even more clarified. To understand how differences were made that was ultimately racialised and then nationalised one needs to look at colonial administration and the creation of differences as was done in the northeast of India in the eighteenth century. The colonial administration had introduced in that period the notion of "racial difference" between the plains and the hills. The hill people belonged to the "Mongolian areas", they belonged "neither historically nor racially" to "India proper" and its "backward area" (that is, plains in the northeast); and therefore as one colonial administrator, R.N. Reid, noted that while power would be soon transferred in the country, these people of the "non-Indian Mongolian areas" should not be made to negotiate with "alien politicians". Another administrator J.P. Mills noted the "sharp cultural distinctions... (which) needed little re-emphasis". The "languages of the hills with the exception of the Khasis were all Tibeto-Burman"; the indigenous system of self-government was "vigorously alive" in the hills while it had "disappeared from the plains", the "hills were clearly different", "self-sufficiency was greater, artistic development was higher, squalor and misery rare, and sense of social responsibility... high". And just as Hinduisim and Islam covered all aspects of life in the plains, "Christianity or animism" similarly covered the tribal way of life.¹⁴ In the context of what the colonial administration saw as racial, ethnic, and cultural differences, the Deputy Commissioner of the Naga Hills J.H. Hutton recommended the entire hill area between the two countries, India and Burma, to become a crown colony (like Singapore and Swaziland) after the transfer of power.

Yet, as we know, the nationalist pressure proved too strong for retaining such an indirect and graded system of rule. The 1935 Act with respect to Assam had designated the Northeast Frontier Tracts, the Naga Hills District, the Lushai Hills District, and the North Cachar Sub-division of the Cachar District as excluded areas. The Garo Hills District, the Mikir Hills in Nowgong and Sibsagar Districts, and the British portion of the Khasi and Jaintia Hills District other than Shillong Municipality and Cantonment became the partially excluded areas. A special cadre for the frontier area was created in Burma, and India followed suit. The only nagging problem remained the issue of slavery. The Government of India adhered to League of Nations' Slavery Convention (1926). Slavery, practised by many hill communities, therefore could not be allowed there to continue indefinitely. However, control over slavery and human sacrifice was only the beginning of the march towards extending full administrative control and settlement of the area. War became the second occasion. And the third occasion was the argument voiced by Gopinath Bardoloi and the Khasi leader Nichols-Roy, which gained ground after the war ended in that area, that with independence the fruits of self-rule and democratic institutions could no longer be denied to the hill people of that region. By the time the Indian constitution came to be framed, political exclusion of the hill areas (including Manipur and Tripura which had evolved along different historical line) was out of question. The end of political exclusion meant also the end of autonomy. In free India the race card regarding northeast was played to deprive rather than to include.

It was at the time of the debate on the provisions of the Sixth Scheduled that such a mentality of the officials from the plane lands became apparent particularly among members of the dominant religious, caste and ethnic/race groups. When there were discussions of making the Naga Hills an autonomous council some of the responses of the members of the Assembly reflected the attitude of the architects of the Constitution towards these people. Kuladhar Chaliha from Assam was particularly vocal. He said:

The Nagas are a very primitive and simple people and they have not forgotten their old ways of doing summary justice when they have a grievance against anyone. If you allow them to rule us or run the administration it will be a negation of justice or administration and it will be something like anarchy.¹⁵

Although not as loud as Kuladhar Chaliha but there were many others who made it obvious that the Nagas did not belong among those who could govern. Brajeshwar Prasad from Bihar during the same debate stated that, “responsibilities of parliamentary life can be shouldered by those who are competent, wise, just and literate. To vest wide political powers into the hands of the tribals; is the surest method of inviting chaos, anarchy and disorder throughout the length and breadth of this country.”¹⁶ Even Gopinath Bordoloi who drafted the Sixth Schedule commented that currently hardly any of the tribes can be called self-governing but “the time may come when they may become fit to govern themselves.”¹⁷

Discussions on the Sixth Schedule were a precursor of things to come in the future. The members of Constituent Assembly who were deliberating on the creation of a democratic constitution for India were not merely obsessed with the idea of maintaining order as Paul Brass has suggested. That was just one of the things that they concerned themselves with. They were also in the business of constructing a citizenship that would be loyal to the order that they were seeking to maintain. On the basis of such criteria they constructed notions and discourses of who belonged and who did not. They created a hierarchy of citizenship and in that hierarchy many northeastern tribal groups were at the bottom rung. Their avowed difference was considered deviance and their looks also made them the marked aliens. They were at best patronised and at worst vilified. At the back of everyone’s mind was the fact that these people were not *us* and so unworthy of any autonomy or self-rule. Even as early as in the Constituent Assembly the nation’s leaders were using the language of their colonisers to deal with all those they considered as *other*/deviant. This was decisive in shaping state attitude towards the region. If one looks at the history of the Rohingyas in Myanmar one begins to understand how race and religion was used to dis-empower groups in colonial and post-colonial periods.

Arguably the word Rohingya came from the word Rohang, which was the historical name given to Arakan. The treaty of Yandaboo of 1826 led to the absorption of the Arakan Hills into the British Empire. The border between Arakan and Bengal was always porous leading to cross border exchanges and during nineteenth century the Arakan region witnessed migrations from Bengali Muslims into the Arakan Hills. These Bengali Muslims hailed from Chittagong. However, there is enough evidence to suggest that there was a Muslim presence in the Arakan hills even before the arrival of the Bengali Muslims from Chittagong.¹⁸ Today Arakan Hills are in the Rakhine state in Myanmar. Much of the people in the Rakhine state are the Buddhist Rakhines and the Islamic Rohingyas. Other than these are the Chin, Mro and Khami. The Arakan Hills had their autonomous administration until 1784, when the Burman King

Bodawpaya defeated the Arakan King and ended that autonomy. Later the Arakan King took shelter in Bengal and the British got involved in the conflict and after 1826 the Arakan Hills became part of the British Empire.

After Burma's independence in 1948 the political demands of the Buddhist and the Muslims from the Arakan Hills was never met. In 1962 when Ne Win seized power the situation of ethnic and religious minorities became precarious. In 1982 the new Citizenship Act made it impossible for Muslims to become full citizens. At best they were given a status of associate citizen. As for the Rohingyas they became a stateless community in 1982 when the Myanmar Citizenship Law excluded them from the list of 135 national ethnic groups.¹⁹ The situation of Rohingyas became progressively more precarious. For decades Rohingyas have been subjected to excessive violence. In 1989 the Myanmar government issued colour coded scrutiny card for citizens but Rohingyas were not issued any card. On 21 February, 1992, U Ohn Gyaw, the Foreign Affairs Minister of Myanmar announced: "Historically, there has never been a "Rohingya" race in Myanmar? Since the first Anglo-Myanmar War in 1824, people of Muslim faith from the adjacent country illegally entered Myanmar Naing-Ngan, particularly Rakhine State. Being illegal immigrants they do not hold immigration papers like other nationals of the country."²⁰ This has been the official line since. From 1995 as a result of enormous pressure from the UNHCR the Rohingyas were given a white card that could not be used to claim citizenship as that card did not mention a person's citizenship. The situation of Rohingyas did not improve at all.

In 2015 the trials and tribulations of Rohingyas became known to the world when it was discovered that hundreds of Rohingyas were perishing in the boats as they were trying to escape persecution in Myanmar. None of the other countries in the region were willing to take in the Rohingyas. With the Rohingyas were many Bangladeshi forced migrants. Not only were they being denied safe haven, they were also denied resources essential for survival. In these boats were women, children, the maimed, the sick, one and all trying to escape persecution and survive. Their first port of entry was Bangladesh because of proximity and religious affinity but in this case race/ethnicity was proving stronger than any other affinities. From 2009 onwards even Bangladesh was refusing to accept Rohingya refugees. The plight of Rohingyas in high seas led to protest by international human rights regime when open graves were discovered in Thailand. This more than any other event revealed the precarious situation of the Rohingya population. In March 2017 another crackdown of Rohingya Muslims was defended by the Myanmar government as counter insurgency operations. Social scientists call the Rohingyas "the world's most persecuted minority without citizenship."²¹ As for Rohingya women their situation is even worse. According to one observer, "because of the diversity among Burma's 135 officially-recognized ethnic groups generalizing about them is risky. However, there clearly exists a country-wide pattern to the abuses suffered by Karen, Karenni, Mon, Shan, Kachin, Chin, Arakanese, Rohingya, and other ethnic women."²² Among the groups mentioned the Rohingya women are worst off because they belong to a stateless community. A 440 page report by UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) released in August 2018 details the persistence of crime against Rohingya women in Myanmar. The report "includes accounts of women tied by their hair or hands to trees then raped; young children trying to flee burning houses but forced back inside; widespread use of torture with bamboo sticks, cigarettes and hot wax; and landmines placed at the escape routes from villages, killing people as they fled army crackdowns."²³ About

their situation even in camp sites an UNFPA report states, “women and girls report being harassed while attempting to access humanitarian services or perform essential tasks, such as collecting water or using the latrine. Many lack adequate clothing and essential hygiene items.”²⁴ It is obvious that the situation of women gets worse when their communities are under siege. Do crimes against women increase when a community is under siege due to racial and religious reasons?

The Unspoken Fourth

According to Carolyn Merchant while debate over how certain groups were perceived as aliens there was debate on the nature of women in Europe. During this debate, women were considered as essentially emotional and fragile and they needed firm control to guide them just as nature's disorder necessitated order, her chaos presaged control, and that which was wild needed to be tamed. Merchant argues that the mastery of women coincided with the mastery of nature in European society. In this way Merchant argues women became the emotional resource for men but this resource needed to be harnessed.²⁵ Women were increasingly restricted, not only in production, but in reproduction as well. As far as I am concerned it was women's economic role that was necessitated by subsistence living in families. Thus women remained economic resources but their control was justified by highlighting their ability to be emotional resource for their husbands. If women were not marked as being of unbalanced nature, then their control by their husbands signified through marriage might be questioned and the entire family structure could be challenged. Husbands were like superior races ordained to control. These were institutions meant to maintain social order imbued with religious values. In this sort of framework women living alone also was perceived as a social threat. In 1492 an ordinance was passed in Coventry forbidding women under the age of fifty to live alone instead they could go into service until marriage. But within a century economic independence for women was becoming increasingly difficult.²⁶ It was with the arrival of the modern era that women began to lose out even more. French Revolution legitimised the de-politicisation of French women by denying them the vote. How could they be a citizen (*citoyenne*) without the vote? Even in work participation women were progressively losing out because of middle class domesticity. Then the skills argument was used to deny women who were deemed unfit for prime jobs because of lack of skill.

In 1990 Steinberg uncovered the often arbitrary and subjective basis of skill determination and its relationship to job awards. She concluded that males exerted considerably more power over the definition of skills, and the maintenance of those definitions.²⁷ Apart from Steinberg, Sawchuk showed the fallacy of the skills debate and argued as follows:

the failure to recognize the socially situated and collaborative nature of all skill performance; the failure to openly address the imbalances of power and thus the tendencies to reproduce inequities; the failure to recognize economic, sectoral, organizational dynamics; and finally the failure to address the conflation of ‘actual skill/competency’ versus relations of ‘power/control’.²⁸

By exposing the caveat in the skills debate feminist authors were able to argue that skills are defined as a non-racial and ungendered conception because of conscious decision of certain groups. Where migration is concerned the skills debate proved to be particularly problematic for women. It could be used to both displace and deny asylum. Even when skills of forced migrants are considered as real it can be viewed with suspicion. Skill was used as a construct particularly to deny the alien person and among the aliens the skill regime deprived women the

most. Most forced migrant women lost out when their skills were considered crucial for giving them asylum. What qualities they did not possess was often defined as skills. Racial threat perceptions further made whatever qualities they possess suspect.

Actually the entire construction of the skills regime played into the fear migrants. Very recently Donald Trump's response to the caravan people portrayed the racial connotations of forced migration. According to one feminist social scientist, "both sensationalist and more moderate immigration restriction efforts rely upon seemingly identity-neutral narratives of protecting the well-being of a vulnerable national citizenry to justify the illicitly racialized and gendered treatment of undocumented immigrants and their citizen children. Commonsensical notions of biological reproduction are welded to emotional distress over national precariousness, weighing down abstract claims that immigration generates a national state of emergency."²⁹ Compounded with this is the notion of lack of necessary skills of forced migrants, particularly forced migrant women.

Forced Migration and South Asia

In the context of South Asia forced migration was closely related to both race, religion and gender. We have already discussed the issue of race now let us discuss the issue of gender. Thus, modern states that are built on gender differences develop a precarious relation with its women. Women became both subjects of the state as well as its other. In pluralistic societies such as those found in South Asia "the modern projects of national independence, state building, and economic development have had distinctive gender implications and outcomes." The nation building projects in South Asia has led to the creation of a homogenized identity of citizenship. State machineries seek to create a "unified" and "national" citizenry that accepts the central role of the existing elite. This is done through privileging majoritarian, male and monolithic cultural values that deny the space to difference. Such a denial has often led to the further segregation of the marginalized, on the basis of caste, religion and gender from the collective we. One way of marginalizing women from body politic is done by targeting them and displacing from in times of state verses community conflict. As a refugee a woman loses her individuality, subjectivity, citizenship and her ability to make political choices. As political non-subjects refugee women emerge as the symbol of difference between us/citizens and its other/refugees/non-citizens. Refugee women become the material for the symbolic construction of the nation's boundaries. By studying women's displacement in South Asia authors came up with these theoretical assumptions and more. In discussing women's experiences of displacement they portrayed how as dislocated subjects women negotiate spaces to retrieve agency in the face of institutional apathy.

Privileging women's own experiences in refugee discourses in South Asia began with Sri Lankan analysts. Selvy Thiruchandran, Sasanka Perera and others claimed the centrality of women as dislocated subjects. Perera in his study on Monaragala and Hambantota districts worked on households that were formerly headed by male but now they are female headed. He came up with experiences of how women have coped with trauma and yet have continued their everyday life amidst depression, lack of economic opportunities and justice. He called for people working with the displaced population to be more sensitive to women as in most cases it is they who have taken up the onus of giving stability to their families.³⁰ Darini Rajasingham Senanayake wrote on how strongly women came out during the civil war in Sri Lanka. They stood out as individuals

or as small groups exposing atrocities and violations of dignity. She says women's history does have a triumph. There is powerlessness and disappointment but also dreams and hopes.³¹

It is these writing that recognized that even in their marginality refugee women are never merely victims. Bolan Gangopadhyay's essay on women refugees from East Pakistan portrays how women exert agency even in situations of marginality.³² It has been recognized that the women refugees from East Pakistan/Bangladesh have altered the work pattern of women in Bengal and changed the definition of what constitutes a *bhadramahila*.³³ Women have often used their marginality to retrieve agency. The *Women of Vitasta* in Kashmir is a case in point. Afghan women in Pakistan have for long agitated for their voices to be heard in peacemaking. Dislocation is a debilitating experience no doubt but many exception women have transformed it into an empowering one. They have assumed newer roles as head of households. Such experiences have increased their confidence, though at times it may have contributed to their trauma. I have met a number of women in camps in Sri Lanka who have used dislocation as an empowering incident. They have happily assumed the role of breadwinners. When these women take refuge in a different country they assume agency even at the face of opposition from asylum giving states because in a new area they are able to transcend patriarchal control. Sometimes repatriation can seem problematic because these women are then forced back within the control of traditional patriarchy.

These studies on women's forced displacement works against a state centric narrative on the situation of refugee women as that leads to the trivialization of women as mere victims. It focuses attention towards the argument that State policy often results in the creation of refugees. State policy is not un-gendered. It results from a political effort to homogenize citizenship. The ruling elites decide who belong and who does not. Rape, sexual assault and other gendered crimes are perpetrated against women to dislocate the civil society (which in conflict situation is formed largely of women) of the other in moments of conflict. Crimes against women are then trivialized as a natural result of conflict. Therefore, death or a serious threat to liberty becomes a reason for asylum but rape or vulnerability to human trafficking does not. Such a value judgment makes it even more difficult for women to seek asylum. This is a way of marginalizing crimes against women and then marginalizing the woman and making her a political non-subject and then reducing them to the status of political non-subjects. To retrieve women's experiences from such marginalisations it is essential to recognize the individual voices of refugee women in any narrative of displacement. Narrative based on responses of South Asian states cannot do so because governmental discourse reduces women to the status of victim and then justify their experiences as marginal and hence unimportant. Only by retrieving refugee women's own voices and not dismissing their individual experiences as anecdotal can we centre the marginal.

About a gendered analysis of forced migration Eileen Pittaway and Linda Bartolomei says that for too long, the prevailing discourse about refugee women and girls has been about a vulnerable minority. This has been reinforced by media stories and fundraising advertisements which depict them as helpless and hopeless. It is true that these women are vulnerable but so are the men who become victims of forced migration. So why privilege women's experience is something that we are often asked. "While sharing with men and boys the same basic needs for food, water, shelter, sanitation and security, they do have additional and significantly different needs. The most important difference is that of endemic and often systemic sexual and gender-based violence against women and girls. Men and boys are also victims of sexual and gender-based violence, which again generates the need for different and appropriate responses³⁴ If one negates the

sexual abuses faced by the Rohingya women both in their state of origin or in their host countries then one misses the larger picture of why a gendered analysis is important.

To concentrate only on the vulnerability of refugee women, either through the axis of race, religion or because of gender can be a disservice to these women. As many feminist scholars have shown us the service that these women give to their host countries as well as to their families is a testimony to their strengths. In the post partition days, refugee women and girls entered the work force in large numbers thereby allowing middle class women to access other forms of work. Ishita and Deepita Chakravarty writes that, “the three decades after independence were crucial in shaping domestic service as a strongly feminized area of work with a large-scale presence of girl children working in the urban areas. The high rate of participation by very young girls in paid work, in a state which historically has a low female work participation rate, has made the case unique.”³⁵ There are other authors who talk about the emancipating experience of *bhadramahila* joining the work force in the post partition days.³⁶

Even as forced migrants women perform enormous service for their families. They concentrate “all their efforts on bringing up their children in a safe and stable environment.”³⁷ In the case of Sri Lanka refugees we have seen more often than not more women sought work than their men. Women take up temporary labour to cope with material difficulties. Even in camps in Gujarat after the riots in 2002 women were continuously looking for work.³⁸ It is the women who “maintain cohesiveness within the family by consciously assessing the situation and deciding that their duty is to provide their dependents with financial and emotional security.”³⁹ Regarding the situation of women in Sri Lanka, one analyst has commented; “displacement and camp life had also provided spaces for empowerment for several Tamil women who had taken on the role of head of household for various reasons.”⁴⁰ Women have had great impact both in displacement and in rehabilitation and the masculinist and mainstream narratives have often forgotten that.⁴¹

Intersection of Race and Gender: The Forced Migrant

In this paper I have tried to portray how race and gender have impacted on the citizenship question thereby impacting questions of forced migration. Race becomes the ground for deciding who belonged and who did not. Creating forced migrants is the result of a conscious will and gender becomes the axis through which groups are made vulnerable. Women’s bodies are transformed into borders that is in the middle of the debate of belonging or not. About the intersection of race and gender in the refugee question Eileen Pittaway and Linda Bartolomei comments:

During armed conflict, women can become the targets of “ethically motivated gender-specific” forms of violence. Ideological frameworks developed by extreme forms of nationalism and fundamentalism that reify women’s image as “bearers of the culture and values” have led to widespread sexual assaults against women as political acts of aggression. Such acts of sexual aggression are often fuelled by race- and gender-based propaganda. An additional intersect of race and gender is the forcible impregnation of females from one ethnic group by males from another group as a form of genocide. Women bear the direct impact of these actions. Racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance have increasingly been used to incite armed conflicts over resources and rights within and between countries around the world.⁴²

In recent days Donald Trump’s views about South American and Mexican refugees portray how questions of race and migration are intertwined. Our own work on jailed Bangladeshi women and Rohingya women portray how gender and race impact on migrating women. In these jails

their children are removed from them thereby castigating them as suspect mothers. Therefore any course on forced migration or refugee studies remains incomplete without a racial and gendered analysis, particularly without looking at the intersections of race, gender, labour and migration.

¹ Randal C. Archibold, "Arizona Enacts Stringent Law on Immigration," 23 April 2010, The New York Times, Section Politics, <https://www.nytimes.com/2010/04/24/us/politics/24immig.html> accessed on 7 July 2018.

² Micky Hammon, quoted in Kenneth Jost, "Should states crack down on unlawful aliens," CQ researcher, <http://library.cqpress.com.ezproxy.oswego.edu:2048/cqresearcher/document.php?id=cqresrrre2012030900&type=hitlist&num=1> accessed on 23 August 2018.

³ Mary Bauer, *ibid*.

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