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RESEARCH ARTICLE

EDUCATION OF THE DESCENDANTS OF REFUGEES IN WEST BENGAL: A COMPARATIVE STUDY BETWEEN FIRST-GENERATION DESCENDANTS AND SECOND-GENERATION DESCENDANTS

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Abstract

The partition of the Indian Sub-continent into India and Pakistan left millions of Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims in huge troubles, which caused the mass exodus incomparable in world history. The birth of two dominions on the ground of religion leads new socio-political equations on both sides of border. It is unique about the Bengal partition unlike the massive exchange of populations in 1947-50 on the western border of India, the influx of refugees across the Bengal border remained a continual process for decades to follow. There were refugees from East Pakistan now Bangladesh mainly took shelter in West Bengal. The refugees first struggle for food and shelter. After a long wait, they were able to manage it. Then comes the education of these refugee-children. Admission to school often becomes a major problem for these children. Sometime, they start going to school but due to poverty or others, they are to leave schools. Only with education, the refugee and the descendants of refugees can come to the mainstream of country life. Education provides opportunities for student, their families and communities to begin the trauma healing process, and to learn the skill and values needed for a peaceful future and better governance. There are studies which explore the rehabilitation and the process of influx and the development works by the various agencies or researchers. But specifically, education of the refugees in West Bengal from East Pakistan has not been emphasized in those researches. This study will explore in details of the education received by the descendants of refugees with a comparative study of first-generation descendants and second-generation descendants.

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Introduction:

Human being always has been searching for better life-li-hood from the beginning of human evolution and they are moving from one area to another from their own instinct. But very often, they are to leave their own country in mass compelled by outside causes and become refugee. Bengal and Panjab were affected much.

The refugee movement in the west border was completed within few years but it is going on in eastern border till now. Shimla Deputation in October 1, 1906; the Educational Conference in Dhaka in July, 1906 and then the formation of the All-India Muslim League in December, 1906 giving the entry of Muslim League in Indian politics resulting the

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Birth of two countries Pakistan and India nipped the bud of East Bengal Hindu to be refugee in West Bengal. Refugee influx from East Bengal started after the riots at Noakhali in October, 1946. It took place in the crescendo of violence in Calcutta after the call for Direct Action Day on 16 August, 1946.

The more consequent happenings which forced the refugee arrival to West Bengal are military operation in September 1948 in the State of Hyderabad, introduction of pass port system for travel from Pakistan to India on 15 October 1952, increasing Urdu Bengali controversy in East Pakistan from the middle of 1952, adoption of Islamic constitution in 1956 in Pakistan, Prohibition of sale of immovable property by any Hindu in Pakistan from on 12 January 1964, Hazratbal incident etc.

Migration of the Bengali refugee from East Bengal was started from the time of Noakhali riot of 1946 and this migration was continued until 1971. Another chunk of refugee from East Bengal came to India due to civil war in East Pakistan. In those days, it was arranged the foods for there fugees and their children. Education was not considered, that now considered.

Among the migrants from East Pakistan, there were poor cultivators, artisans, petty traders and others. They lacked the minimum means necessary for setting up resident colonies. They took shelter in the government camps. Government had set up schools and training centres.

The camp population was often transitory in nature as the government tried to rehabilitate the inhabitants somewhere permanently.

In refugee camps, the refugees themselves set up few schools in few locations. Government also set up refugee-schools for the children of the refugees. A group of intelligent and educated refugee-people were trying to carveoutaniche for themselves in a new country. After securing the basic necessity of life, th emembers of the colony would look to establish a school, as they regarded education as the utmost important element for their children, the only way to survive in the new land. The post partition period was a critical phase in the biography of the new nation as well. There fugees as well as the government, both were trying to work out away to move ahead, leaving behind the tumultuous for the first two decades after partition. The aim was to educate the descendants of the refugee, to make them developed and suited to be inline with the main stream Indian Citizen.

Government recognition for these schools was crucial. It would not only mean a value of the degree conferred by the school, but also enable them to get grants. To get their cognition, proper school building and qualified teachers were essential. But, for the refugees, these were often in surmountable obstructions. However, in the long run, the refugee children got scope to go to school and get education.

It is an interesting topic to work with displacement, migration, relocation, nostalgia, trauma and finally the survival of refugees. But it seems a great issue to nurture participation of the descendants of refugees in education. Education owing the backbone of a nation, it is an important parameter in settlement of refugee families and development of the refugee-descendants also. It will be made comparison between the educational level attained by the first-generation Descendants and the second-generation Descendants of refugees. For this study, one refugee camp of West Bengal has been considered that is Ranaghat Cooper's Camp, Nadia.



Location of Ranaghat Cooper's Camp at Ranaghat in West Bengal

Cooper's Camp was established on 11 March 1950 by the West Bengal Government. It was one of the largest transit camps in West Bengal. The camp offered a basic medical facility in the form of Cooper's general hospital and it functioned till 1977. The lighting facility of the camp was limited and drinking water was not adequate. The camp was full of open latrines and open drainage system which was hazardous and was responsible for the decline in health among the residents of the camp. From 21 March 1950, the camp was supported by the central Government. By this time, many people died after suffering from cholera. Although, Ranaghat Cooper's Camp was transit camp, finally many refugees first, then their first-generation descendants and the second-generation descendants settled here.

Research Methodology:

Methodology is an integral part of any research. It is the systematic and scientific approach to achieve an objective. Its contribution is for carrying on the research works in a systematic and effective means. Research methodology offers the tools and procedures by which a research problem is explored. It is concerned with the processes and procedure adopted to achieve the particular objective of a research study. It must have the steps to explore the objectives and to draw any conclusion. This study falls under the category of qualitative and quantitative survey type of research. To study the conditions of refugees both the primary and secondary sources have been considered in which Historical and quantitative techniques have been used. Here, data collected by different tools. For the collection of data, tools were developed by the investigator. Quantitative and qualitative data were collected for the present study. The tools are Questionnaire, Information Schedule and Problem Check-list. The Descendants have been divided into two categories. One is First-Generation Descendant and other is Second-Generation Descendant.

The children of the refugees are considered as First-Generation Descendant and the children of the First-Generation Descendant has been considered as the second-Generation Descendant. The identified areas which are highly populated refugee-camps are Banpur, Bagula, Kalyani, Dhubulia, Chamta and Ranaghat coopers in West Bengal. The researcher has visited the highly refugee-children populated area of Ranaghat cooper's camp by physically, and collected data by direct interview from this area. The collected data regarding education has been observed, summarised and tabulated below considering the categories like First Generation Descendants,

Data Analysis:

Field survey is administered on 87 number of Descendants. Information about education level attained by the descendants is tabulated and compared.

Maximum educational level attained by all the Descendants (87Heads):					
Education Level/ Class	Number of students	Education Level/ Class	Number of students	Education Level/ Class	Number of students
0	0	5	14	10	13
1	1	6	8	11	1
2	7	7	5	12	10
3	6	8	7	Graduate	3
4	7	9	3	Post Graduate	1

From the above the following table may be constructed.

Upto Level/ Class Completed	V	VIII	X	Graduation
Percentage	75.86	43.67	32.18	4.6

There fore, if it may be considered that those who passed at least VIII, they could read Bengali in the long run and that is 43.67%. Again, it is seen from the above table that only mere 32.18% of the refugee-children were Madhyamik pass. That is, mostly no care was taken for the education of Descendants of refugees.

Maximum educational level attained by first-generation Descendants of refugees (32Heads):					
Education Level	Number of students	Education Level	Number of students	Education Level	Number of students
0	0	5	7	10	4
1	0	6	6	11	0
2	2	7	2	12	4
3	1	8	2	Graduate	1
4	3	9	0	Post Graduate	0

From the above the following table may be constructed.

Upto Level/ Class Completed	V	VIII	X	Graduation
Percentage	81.3	34.4	28.1	3.1

If it may be considered that those who passed at least VIII, they could read Bengali in the long run and that is 34.4 % in case of first-generation students. Again, it is seen from the above table that only 28.1 % of the refugee-children were Madhyamik pass and only 3.1% was graduate among the first-generation descendants

Maximum educational level attained by second-generation Descendants of refugees (55Heads):					
Education Level	Number of students	Education Level	Number of students	Education Level	Number of students
0	0	5	7	10	9
1	2	6	2	11	1
2	5	7	3	12	6
3	5	8	5	Graduate	2
4	4	9	3	Post Graduate	1

From the above the following table may be constructed.

Upto Level/ Class Completed	V	VIII	X	Graduation
Percentage	70.9	49.1	34.5	5.5

From the above table, it is seen that 70.9% of secondgeneration have passed at least class V and 49.1% passed at least VIII.They could read Bengali in the long run. In the second-generation students, 34.5% have passed Madhyamikat least and 5.5% passed Graduation.

Comparison of Education of First-generation Descendants and Second-generation Descendants		
Education Level	First Generation Descendants	Second Generation Descendants
Upto Class V completed	81.3%	70.9%
Up to Class VIII completed	34.4%	49.1%
Upto Class X completed	28.1%	34.5%
Upto Graduation completed	3.1%	5.5%

From the above table, it is seen that the education of the Descendants of refugees is not improved although a generation may be 25 years passed in between.

In this context, one interview with the first-generation descendant may be cited here. The first-generation descendant was telling about his son who just passed madhyamik examination with a first division. Ok, in our society (Bansho/ Goshthee), till now there is no one passed madhyamik. My son is madhamik pass. I do not want anymore. This is sufficient and my son will help me in my cultivation. This is the thought of the refugee children about education.

Findings:

It is observed that the condition of the refugees and their Descendants were not good. On the basis of all the above data and discussion, it is noticed that only 32.18% of the Descendants are passing Madhyamik. It is too poor. Again, it is seen that there is no significant difference in the education attained by the first-generation Descendants and second-generation Descendants. One point to note here again that percentage of V pass students is less in case of second-generation descendants than the first-generation descendants. Only a mere 4.6% of descendants of refugees are able to complete graduation; 3.1% in first generation and 5.5% in second generation descendants. Therefore, it is clear that the refugees or their children remain in the same darkness. No education means no mental development, no cultural development; no overall development.

Conclusion:

Education being the backbone of a nation is always given the priority. Today's children become the future citizen of the country. Therefore, each nation takes care of his new age citizen. But refugees when are allowed to settled down in a country, are not taken care of in most cases. The main issue was always neglected. Even though, the refugees were settled with a cottage on a land with some kinds but education of the refugee-children was not considered seriously. As a result, one generation of the descendants of the refugee, mainly who were at the age group from 10 to 20 in time of influx at West Bengal had become deprived of continuing education. There were too much hurdles of being admitted to school or reaching to schools. There were little educational facilities, tools available in schools. Teachers were also lesser. In spite all problems, these negativities were mitigated with passage of time that is from first-generation Descendants to second-generation Descendants but this transformation was not sufficient. Hence, it is seen that highly educated persons are very few among the descendants of refugees.

The govt. of India or the native people or the refugees previously settled in all aspects could not show any sympathy or could not nestle them. Some of the refugees' or the descendants' thought is different about education. Even today, they are in the opinion that how the education will help us, there is no job, nothing and to do the farming or labouring much education not required. The educated established people should come forward for preaching them all so that they understand the value of education. It is seen that mostly no educational development has taken place in case of the Descendants. Hence, the expected development was not occurred. They should be given importance in giving proper education. Then only they may come along side the main stream citizen of the country.

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