

Migration of Sindhi Community in Partitioned India

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Abstract:- Sindhis are the linguistic minority of Indo- Aryan group in free India. Every minority study has a dominant political resonance. Sindhis too have this kind of concern; hence this research article is focused on the Partition of India, its after-effects, migration and oral histories of women and refugees. Sindhis are known as migrant community and labelled refugee after partition of India while this community belong to the oldest civilization of the world. The Partition of India is regarded as a localized displacement between two countries. But it truly was much more than that. It was a human juncture and I think the world underestimates the effects of Partition and how many people were affected by it. This research is not trying to tell the story of all refugees who lived through Partition, but it can still offer information that enriches knowledge of Partition. This study aims to uplift the experiences and stories of refugees who lived through Partition.

The Partition and its independence generated two states and peoples, thus reconsidering the concepts of ‘us’ and ‘them’ in the region. While this extremely important event continues to figure out the patterns of inter-state relations in the subcontinent, it is their ability to affect national identities within the country in the 21st century that remains especially compelling. Partition has also altered the Indian identity. The families who were replaced by Partition carry the remembrance of violence and their homeland with them and oral histories of a life which they shared are means to preserve their memories.

This research offers a way to begin to understand and consider the connections of gender and minority experiences of Partition and Indian nationalism. By making extensive use of archived material and oral histories and working on the historical aspects of identity and community, the importance of this work is to emphasize the processive dimension of identity building and the transformation of the community.

This paper findings show that those who have experienced partition expressed the belief that the political environment is far beyond their control and that they hardly chose to leave their homes and establish their lives elsewhere. Oral histories can specifically convey a narrative of displacement and what it meant to develop new lives, homes and political affiliations in a context that was restructured as home.

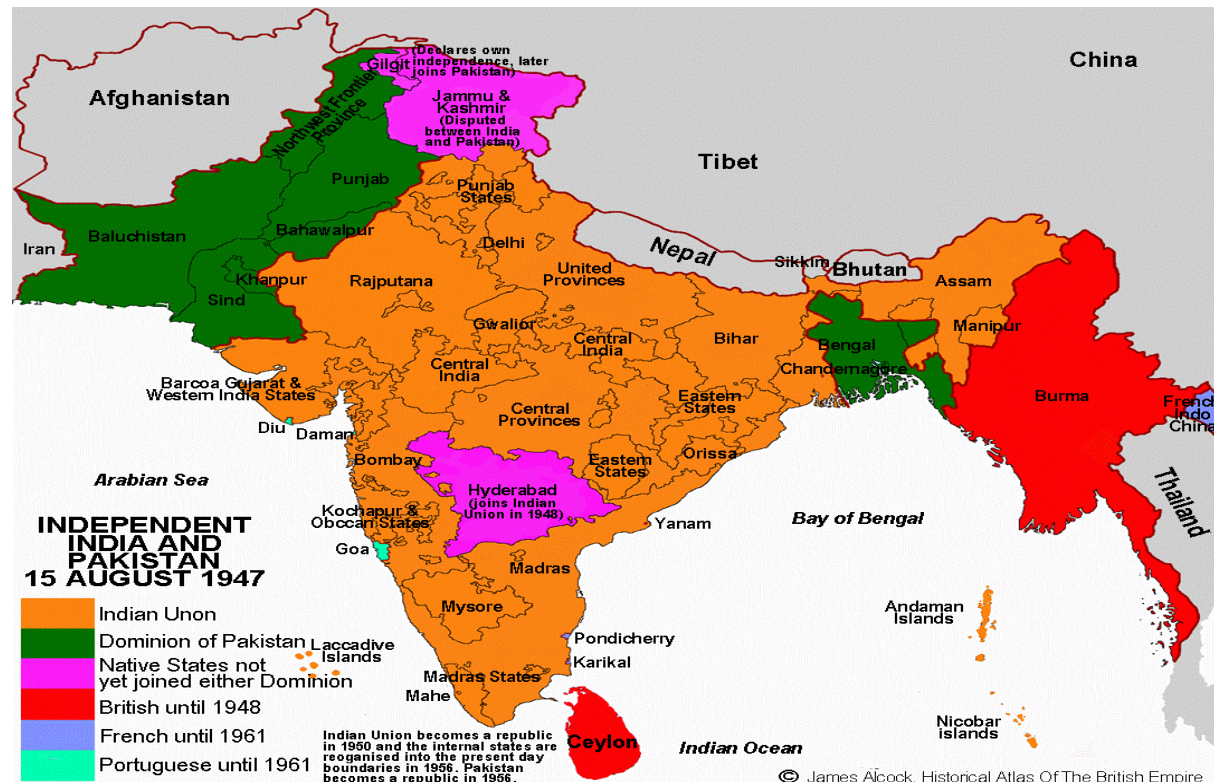
Keywords: *Partition, Migration, Identity, Sindhi community and Oral histories.*

1. Introduction

The year 1947 marked the beginning of a period of dramatic change in India. In August of the same year, after years of formal colonial rule and more than three centuries of British presence in the country, India gained independence from Britain. Only one day after independence, India experienced a "partition": it was divided into two and the northwest border of was transferred, creating a new country Pakistan.

The Indian population is divided into people by religion. Muslims are required to move people to Pakistan and Sikhs and Hindus to the newly defined India. In a few months, as many as 15 million people crossed this border. This period was filled with fear and uncertainty: up to a million people died in riots and sectarian violence. (Butalia, 2000) writes that once it was clear that the state had decided to Partition India and Pakistan, both Hindu and Muslim communities began attacking each other. This violence was especially brutal in communities along the border of India and Pakistan, which was very hastily drawn by the British.

In India, the close integration between "population exchange" and identity formation is particularly obvious. The partition and its independence gave rise to two countries and peoples, thus rethinking the concept of "us" and "them" in the region. *Mass migration and loss of home should certainly be examined as a complex and layered trauma experience. Most Sindhi Hindus migrated from Sindh (such as Karachi, Hyderabad, and Shikarpur) to settle in corresponding large cities such as Mumbai and Delhi, while people from villages and small towns in Sindh live in small Indian towns, such as Ulhasnagar (Falzon, 2004).*



The examination of human history would indicate the pivotal role that migration and movement of population has played in deciding the very character of human society today. This may seem to be a natural process, but its ability to impact the political, social, and economic dynamics of both, the sender and host-country and critical concepts like 'identity', 'citizenship' and 'belonging' has compelled many, especially in the West to adopt legislation limiting the process. This pull-push between the forces 'for' and 'against' migration is what has defined intelligent conversation about the subject. But, the purpose of the present review remains critical to the discourse, it is a subset of the 'migration' discourse and its impact that is often neglected namely 'population exchange'. While talking on the subject often focuses on the conditions that lead to 'population exchange' and the migrants as 'victims' it is its vast ability to be 'operationalized' for the formation and embedment of identities, that is crucial.

The close alliance of 'population exchange' and identity formation has been particularly obvious in the case of India. The Partition and its independence generated two states and peoples, thus reconsidering the concepts of 'us' and 'them' in the region. While this extremely important event, having resulted over 70 years ago, continues to figure out the patterns of inter-state relations in the subcontinent, it is their ability to affect national identities within the country in the 21st century that remains especially compelling. Focusing on the case of India, this study questions the role 'population exchange' continues to play in the process of formation of identity in the country in the 21st century.

The Partition occurred on the basis of religion. (Saberwal, 2005) The categorization and cementing of identity was done on a national scale. In this case, identity became political. No other aspect of one's identity mattered, only one's religion did. (Becker, 1963) 1947 was not the only time my respondents witnessed violence.

Identity is a multi-faceted notion (Sen, 2006) (Jamieson, 2002) which may refer to one's nationality, ethnicity, sexuality, gender, occupation or religion. *Master status refers to a part of one's identity that will in most cases overpower or dominate others in most social situations* (Becker, 1963). Partition in simple words means to divide into parts. The Partition of India does not only refer to divisions through state lines rather it is more significant about the division in identities. It is a study of social classes, space, state lines and identities constructed. The

Partition then becomes a study of identities, a combination of personal history and state categorization in this case, some identities are given and sometimes these given identities continue to define us.

The following statistics show the effect of the decision to bifurcate India. The census of 1941 and 1951 reflect on the almost immediate displacement that occurred. It is to be noted that the census of undivided India in 1941, showed a majority of Hindus who composed 73.81 % of the whole population, Muslims made up 24.28 % and the Christians population amounted to 1.91 %. (Joshi, Srinivas and Bajaj, 2005)

According to a pre-Partition census in 1941 of the current geographical area of India 84.64 % of the population were classified as "Indian Religionists" (Joshi, Srinivas and Bajaj, 2005) 13.38 % as Muslim and 2.1 % as Christian. Post Partition India in 1951 counted 87.22 % as Hindu while the Muslim population dropped to 10.43%.

Comparatively the census of Pakistan in 1941 showed 19.687% as Hindus, 78.824 % as Muslim and 1.489 % as Christians. Post-partition, the census of 1951 in Pakistan provided statistics of an overwhelming religious majority of Muslims amounting to 97.119 % while the Hindu population decreased to a meagre 1.5 %. (Joshi, Srinivas and Bajaj, 2005)

The religious population and the changes in its composition as noted above, were brought about by the migration, some forceful and some voluntary. According to some statistics 16.7 million people (Saberwal, 2005) were uprooted, some remain officially missing.

The Partition remains a story of communal violence, of British policies of divide and rule (Rafi, 2005), *of segregation* (Desai, 1948) *and of identity politics*. The partition did not happen due to a singular reason of religious identity but one that was embedded in a fight for power. According to history (Rafi, 2005) (Saberwal, 2005) (Desai, 1948) undivided India has always been home to multiple religions and identities. The Partition represents a huge shift in the history of the sub-continent. The Memories of the Partition live on through those who survived it and who in turn have passed them onto their descendants. Identities remain at the epicentre of the Partition whether it is nationalist or religious. Nationalist identity is a complicated and contested idea.

Hamza Alavi's idea of post-colonial states having an overdeveloped superstructure is linked to post-colonial states having complex histories and complicated class structures. "The fact that a foreign imperialist bourgeoisie, rather than a rising national bourgeoisie, formed the state is the fundamental issue with post-colonial societies." (Alavi, 1972).

Colonial influences do not fade away with colonial rule according to the author giving rise to complicated state structures. While the author allows that the superstructure is not completely dependent on the base, it is still a determinant. Marx includes the ideologies, identities and culture that people inhabit in the superstructure.

A contextual reading of *Fear of Small Numbers* by Arjun Appadurai is recommended. According to Appadurai, there has never been a clear demarcation between "us and them" in a nation-state because of its vast expanse. "Large-scale violence is not merely the result of opposing identities; it is also one of the means through which an appearance of permanent and charged individual identities develops" (Appadurai, 2006).

Appadurai writes about the complicated matter of majorities and minorities and how such ideas are developed. Within the boundaries of state, ideas of nationalism end up creating social boundaries. When construction of a national ethics, is based on a singular language or religion, it creates a minority. For there to be an idea of "us", the state needs to create the idea of "them". For there to be a majority, there needs to be a minority. The explanation of identities by Appaduraias "whose social constructions and mobilization require the extinction of

other, proximate social categories, defined as threats to the very existence of some group, defined as a we,” (Appadurai, 2006)

This speculation is particularly relevant if we apply it to the clash of identities in the Indian subcontinent. Appadurai’s theories of us and them, attempt to explain how the bothering of others is related to large scale acts of violence. This is preceded and also simultaneously accompanied by the solidification of identity based on us versus them. The Partition occurred in part due to the communal violence that happened owing to Muslims and Hindus creating an idea of ‘us’ versus ‘them’. Appadurai’s idea of predatory identities is relevant when in partition history we see the violence inflicted on people by those from other religions. Hindus felt the need to kill Muslims, Muslims felt the need to hunt Hindus and the witch-hunt was due to this sense of other.

Similarly, Bernard Cohn’s Census may complement Appadurai’s theories. Cohn’s work is based on the solidification and the creation of identities in response to the census. Cohn writes that when the British government asked Indians to describe themselves in a certain way, based on social class and religion etc. it brought into being a case of identity. Cohn writes that when the British imperial government asked Indians to identify themselves in a certain way, based on caste and religion etc. it brought into being a case of identity. Once the census was undertaken, it eventually led to the creation and in turn, solidification of identity, one that did not exist before.

Every minority study has dominant by political resonance, almost all study have been affected by the political affairs of the surroundings. Sindhi people too have this kind of concern. Sindh (Pakistan) was the origin state of Sindhi community. In Sindh, Muslims were in majority and Hindu (all Hindus were Sindhis) were in minority. The politics of power forced them to migrate from Sindh to other parts of free India because entire Sindh was given to Muslim Community to form their new country due to Muslim majority. This research explains the series of incidence which became responsible for migration of Sindhis during the struggle of independence.

The oral histories from those who survived Partition provide a complicated and emotional narrative of Partition that is unavailable in more traditional historical narratives. Furthermore, mainstream narratives of Partition that are promoted today tend to naturalize the division between Hindus and Muslims. The people who were asked to self-describe their lived experiences of Partition. Some chose the word ‘refugee’, while others described their experiences as Hindus or non-Muslims who were forced to resettle. Here I realize this means that we do not have a uniform and contextual way to describe all these people. Other sources, such as the organization *The 1947 Partition Archives*, use “witness” when referring to people who experienced Partition. (1947 Partition Archive, 2017).



Migration Of Sindhis During Partition

2. Conclusion

The Partition of India resulted in one of the greatest migrations in history and the dislocation of millions of people. The reason behind partition was to create nations for India's religious communities. The religion based identity remained the basis of dividing the nation, especially Hindu or Muslim identity. The reason behind Partition was to create nations for India's religious communities. Religion idea based identity remained the basis of dividing the nation, specifically Hindu or Muslim identity.

"It remains widely taken for granted that some sense of continuity of self, the anticipation of a future and a memory of the past, is intrinsic to the human condition and this is often implicit, if not openly acknowledged in much sociological theory." (Jamieson, 2002) Memories as Jamieson writes, is a vital component of being human. Memories and experiences are what identities are made of.

In accordance to identity politics, the Partition meant Hindus belong in one nation and Muslims in another. As was previously said, violence and the Two Nation Theory have contributed to strengthening their identity. (Chatterji, 1994) The Partition meant your key identity is your religion, not your birthplace or your family.

The Sindhi people were totally unclear because many Sindhi never wanted to leave their native place Sindh (Pakistan) but violence, riots, insecurity and discrimination policy forced them to migrate in one hand, on other hand they were considered only 25 per cent of population of Sindh but 40 per cent of belongings (movable and non- movable) was possessed by Sindhi people in Sindh mentioned by Dr. Subhadra Anand. But on the basis of Muslim majority Pakistan was formed, sindhi people thought they were Hindus on that basis they should leave the place (Sindh) and long procedure of migration started from both the borders of India and Pakistan.

My research is intended to give voice to those different minority communities, and with different castes and socio-economic classes who are not always visible. This study aims to uplift the experiences and stories of refugees who lived through Partition. India is a vast and diverse country, and it is unrealistic to attempt to capture a full section of the population and make broad claims about their lived experiences.

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