Chapter III
Rehabilitation of Refugees Coming from East Pakistan

Do you realize that the total grant received for this purpose from your Government in two years – 1948-49 and 1949-50, is a little over three crores and the rest about 5 crores was given in the form of a loan. Do you realize that this sum is ‘insignificant’ compared to what has been spent for the refugees from West Pakistan? ... For months the Government of India would not recognize the existence of the refugee problems in East Pakistan and therefore, would not accept the liabilities on their account.1

This chapter looks at the rehabilitation policies as implemented by the Indian state for the refugees coming from East Pakistan. The policies introduced here were markedly different from those implemented in the West. Defending the policy of Government of India vis-à-vis these refugees, Nehru responded: ‘I do not know’, he wrote, ‘what the expenditure incurred on relief and rehabilitation has been for those coming from East Pakistan. Probably you are right in saying that it has been far less than that for refugees coming from West Pakistan. That certainly has not been because of any desire to differentiate but because of certain overwhelming factors’.2

The pace of migration certainly was a major factor in deciding the pace of rehabilitation in the East. But how far was such an explanation justified? This chapter looks at the efforts made by the State to rehabilitate the refugees coming from East Pakistan. In doing so, the various issues related to the identification of refugees, the treatment of minorities, a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the rehabilitation work done and the differing position of the State at the Centre and the State at the local level are discussed. Alongside, I shall recapitulate the corresponding measures adopted by the State for rehabilitating the refugees from West Pakistan to make the difference clearer.

Priorities and Plans
On the eve of partition, the situation in the East was exactly the opposite of that in the West—peace had prevailed. At least for the next two and half years there was no major communal conflagration in both the Bengals, and migration of the minorities was not

1 B C Roy (Chief Minister, West Bengal) to Pt Jawaharlal Nehru (Prime Minister of India) in a letter dated in Saroj Chakrabarti, With Dr. B.C Roy and Other Chief Ministers: A Record upto 1962, Calcutta: Benson’s, (1974), p. 20.
2 Ibid, p. 21
alarming enough. Such a situation had perhaps provided some hope to both the Governments (India and Pakistan) that a large-scale displacement of population like in the West and the corresponding refugee problem could be prevented in the East. Hence, the primary aim of both the Governments was to prevent any similar population displacement in the East. This explains the toning down of the experience of violence in the East by the State and also the tendency to discourage migration of the refugees from East Pakistan. The means adopted to discourage migration in the East included—limiting rehabilitation of refugees to ad hoc relief measures in the hope that they would go back, restricting entry into Indian Territory to only those who possessed the necessary documents, and finally, dispersal to states other than West Bengal where conditions were quite inhospitable.

Another factor which influenced the rehabilitation programme in the East was that by the time the problem in the East became a serious cause of concern, the Indian State had finalised its Constitution whereby the rights of the minority had to be safeguarded. At the same time, the Hindus of East Pakistan were seen as the minorities of Pakistan and as a corollary, the responsibility of that country. Hence, all means were employed to reassure the minorities of equal citizenship rights and also to safeguard their life and property. This very ideology is the background of the Nehru-Liaquat Ali Pact (1950).

Keeping these points in mind it becomes easy to understand the compulsions behind the varied rehabilitation policy in the East.

**Defining the ‘Displaced Person’**

**Definition based on the Event of Violence**

The varied experience of violence in the East resulted in a slightly different definition of the displaced person from that followed for the West. One of the earliest definitions of the displaced person in the East was as follows:

‘Displaced Person’ means any person who in the opinion of the competent authority—

1. was ordinarily resident in East Bengal but on account of communal disturbances occurring after 1st day of October 1946, left East Bengal and arrived in West Bengal on or before the 31st day of December 1950; and,
2. has no land in West Bengal of which he is the owner; and,
3. has affirmed in an affidavit filed in the office of the competent authority that he does not intend to return to East Bengal.

---

3 As defined in the Rehabilitation of the Displaced Persons and Eviction of Persons in Unauthorized Occupation of Land Act, 1951. This was, in effect, the first major act applied by the State Government to benefit the
The main problem with this definition was that even though it included the victims of Noakhali violence, yet, despite the persistence of migration no provisions were made for those migrants who came after the ‘31st day of December 1950’. Therefore, a revised definition of the displaced person was adopted in 1955 which was far more inclusive. The displaced person was now defined as follows—

a person who was ordinarily resident in the territories now comprised in East Pakistan, but who on account of civil disturbances or on account of the Partition of India has migrated—

a) in the case of persons migrating from the district of Noakhali or the district of Comilla now forming part of East Pakistan, on or after the 1st October 1946, and

b) in the case of persons migrating from any other area in East Pakistan on or after the 1st June 1947.

to the territories now included in the Union of India, with the intention of taking up permanent residence within such territories.4

This made room for the perpetual influx of migrants from East Pakistan. However, increasing the dateline did not really mean increasing the liability of the Government vis-à-vis the refugees as the eligibility criteria for receiving rehabilitation benefits were crafted suitably to eliminate quite a few of them. To obtain any rehabilitation benefits from the State, the migrant would have to produce either of the following documents as an evidence of migration from East Pakistan— Migration Certificates, Citizenship Certificates, documents proving the option taken in case of an optee Government servant.5 If these were unavailable then the following could also be used as a proof of migration—Refugee Registration certificate, Border Slip, Border Ration Slip, Certified Copy of National Census Register. And in case these were also unavailable, then ‘their status as displaced persons would be determined on the basis of circumstantial evidence6

---


5 The official documents mentioned here will be discussed in greater detail subsequently.

6 This notion of ‘circumstantial evidence’ when introduced in the West Bengal Legislative Assembly by Renuka Ray (Rehabilitation Minister, Government of WB) was firmly opposed by the refugee leaders. Prior to this, even a simple recommendation from the local MLA and MP was enough to prove that one was a refugee. Now this practice was to be discontinued since the ruling party saw it as political maneuver by the leftist leaders who signed many such ‘fraudulent’ claims. This point will be elaborated further in the subsequent sections of the chapter. WBLA, 28th September 1955, p. 267.
by an officer not below the rank of a sub-divisional Magistrate. In any case, the final decision taken was that 'no person migrating after 15th October 1952 should be recognised as a displaced person unless he produced a migration certificate.'

But this revised definition too, was not without its flaws. It was made clear in the Conference of the Rehabilitation Ministers from the Eastern States held at Darjeeling, 20th-22nd October, 1955 that only those who ‘had lost use of their house in Pakistan and who had not acquired house in any part of India’ would be eligible for housing benefits in India. This was very different from the case in the West.

In the previous chapter, I have pointed out how the definition of the displaced persons coming from West Pakistan underwent a change depending upon the transition from the stage of provision of relief to that of rehabilitation. Hence, the issue of property was not mentioned in the earliest stages where the chief concern was to provide relief to the displaced persons. It is in the final stage of rehabilitation when claims and compensation for loss of property was being decided upon that property qualifications were added to the definition of the displaced persons. But there is a significant difference here. In the case of displaced persons from East Pakistan, possession of property in East Bengal was immaterial to the Government. What was of consequence was that the displaced person should not be the owner of any property in West Bengal.

The definition as adopted in the West shows that the contrary was true for the displaced person from West Pakistan, i.e. his/her property left behind was a deciding factor and not the possession, if any, in East Punjab or other Indian states. This can be explained on two grounds. One, unlike in the West, the Government of India had never contemplated paying any compensation money to the East Bengal migrant for the property left behind in East Pakistan. Second, possession of property in West Bengal

---

8 Ibid. p. 88
9 Ibid. p. 87
10 Chapter II pp. 70-73.
11 In the revised definition, though the government is concerned over the property left behind by the migrant, it is so only to refuse the migrant’s right to housing benefits as noted above. So if he had a home in East Pakistan, then by virtue of the Delhi Pact of 1950 (to be discussed) he had perpetual rights over his property in East Pakistan (likewise for the Muslim migrant) and hence, ineligible for housing benefits in West Bengal. But later day records show that the migrants did get the necessary house-building loans and the government, too, constructed a few townships for them, but the main crux remained that refugees from East Pakistan were never compensated for the loss of property in East Pakistan unlike their contemporaries in the West.
reduced the liability of the State and encouraged self-rehabilitation. In fact, for the first migrants, this was the norm.\footnote{Bandopadhyay notes how the migrants who came in this period seldom relied on Government aid. They were from the well-to-do classes and were able to adjust in the new state either through the aid of family members or finding suitable jobs and settling down. He specifically uses the following terms to distinguish between the three category of migrants who came in the first phase of migration—1947-1950: \textit{udyomshil} and \textit{swavlambi} (those who were enterprising and self-reliant) they did not depend upon Government aid (\textit{sarkarer mukhopakhi hoveni}); \textit{udyomshil} but required some minimum assistance from Government (agricultural or business loans) and did not take shelter in Government camps rather found vacant plots and land in and around Kolkata for settlement; finally, \textit{daridra ebong jader moner bol nei anghik bhabejoy njader payein darabar khomota chilona} (extremely poor and those who did not even have the mental courage/desire to stand upon their own feet). Only the last category, according to Bandopadhyay took shelter in Government camps in this first phase and numbered a mere 50000. Hiranmoy Bandopadhyay, \textit{Udvastu}, Kolkata: Bangiya Sahitya Samsad (1970), p. 31.}

Finally, the second qualifying statement mentioned in the definition above was the need to declare before a competent authority the clear intention of not ever going back to East Bengal. Whereas, the earlier definition mentions this clearly, the revised definition hints at it—‘with the intention of taking up permanent residence…’\footnote{See definition mentioned above.} This reflects the perception of the Indian State that migration in the East was a temporary affair, and that when the situation would improve in East Pakistan the migrants would go back. Such a perception dictated the rehabilitation policies for the migrants coming from East Pakistan, limiting it to relief only for a long time whereafter it was finally realised that the migrants were here to stay.

**Definition based on Time of Arrival**

A phase-wise migration pattern was a peculiarity in the East, and it is this factor which resulted in a phase-wise categorisation of the migrants.

Those migrants who came during the first phase of migration (1947-1958) were referred to as the ‘old migrants’. They were identified as refugees coming out of genuine grievances of political nature and hence, accepted as government liability. These refugees were mostly rehabilitated in West Bengal and some were sent out to the neighbouring states as well. However, to put an end to the perpetual influx, 31st March 1958 was chosen as the cut-off date whereafter migration from East Pakistan was considered as illegal.

The migrants who came during the period 1st April 1958- 31st December 1963 were considered ‘illegal migrants’ because the Indian state saw no ‘valid reason’ for migration...
in this time of normalcy other than for purely economic factors. These migrants were
 denied any kind of State aid and had to be sustained on their own sources and abilities.
Evidences from archival records show that these migrants were often referred to as
*‘infiltrators’* and *‘fugitives’*.

There was once again a fresh influx of refugees in 1964 in the wake of the Hazrat Bal
Mosque riots. This migration was seen as justified by the State on account of the real
violence experienced by the refugees. However, the earlier policy of providing
rehabilitation outside West Bengal was strictly adhered to and these ‘new migrants’ were
given just two-three days dole in the camps and sent off to Dandakaranya for
rehabilitation. Those who refused to go were denied any form of State aid after the
distribution of an advance dole of six months.

**Definition Based on Rehabilitation**

Refugees were also classified on the basis of their potential to be rehabilitated. Thus,
there was the Rehabilitable Group and the Permanent Liability Group. The former
included those able-bodied refugees and their families who could be employed in some
productive work—urban or rural, thereby making them independent of Government aid.
The Permanent Liability group was defined as those ‘inmates/families who are physically
and/or mentally handicapped, who are too old (70 years and above) and infirm and who
will remain on doles in the Homes permanently till death.’\(^{14}\) A further categorisation was
that of the ‘Provisional PL’ category, i.e. those who ‘may go on rehabilitation if the rate
of rehabilitation loans and assistance is increased. In fact many of such PL Category
families with the changed circumstances change their minds also and opt for
rehabilitation and dispersal from the Homes.’\(^{15}\)

The Screening Committee, however, noted that even among those who were grouped
as PL, there were a few who could be rehabilitated if Government could provide some
aid to them in the form of loans etc. Therefore, this Committee categorised the PL group
further as follows—‘rehabilitable group’, or the RG group, the ‘permanent liability’, or
the PL group, and finally, the ‘border-line cases’, or the BLC category:

\(^{14}\) Problems of Refugee Camps and Homes in West Bengal (The Screening Committee Report, 1989),

\(^{15}\) Ibid. p.8.
Border line case families are those who vacillated during screening whether to opt for rehabilitation or for being PL. They could not settle up their minds though many were willing for rehab (sic). They could not dare so because of some family-difficulties were presently existing. Neither the Committee (sic, meaning Committee) could think it wise to determine their status finally and hence declared them BLC.¹⁶

Then there were the ‘deserter refugees’. As noted above, many among the ‘old migrants’ and all ‘new migrants’ were provided rehabilitation outside of West Bengal in the neighbouring states of Bihar, Orissa, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh and even as far as Andamans. However, in the light of inhospitable conditions and hostility of these states and the locals therein, many of them returned back as deserters. Following the argument that they had willingly deserted the camps arranged by the Government for their rehabilitation, they were no longer considered eligible for State aid. The duty of the Government vis-à-vis these ‘deserter refugees’ was nil. These refugees merged with the urban poor and destitute of the city. The more enterprising among them either found some odd jobs or business for survival, or set up jabardakhal colonies.¹⁷

Apart from the ‘deserter refugees’, there were the ‘Ex-camp site refugees’ as well. After April 1961 all camps in West Bengal were closed down. The inmates of these camps were given two options—either to move out of these camps to the site of rehabilitation [which was very often outside West Bengal] or to take up six months dole in advance and leave the camp. Either ways, after the appointed day all facilities provided in the camps would be stopped—food, water, electricity, medical aid etc. Those who refused to move out of the camps and stayed on even after the facilities were withdrawn were called ‘Ex-campsite refugees’. The Bagjola ex-campsite was the biggest and survives to this day.

Thus, refugees in the East were defined in terms of time of migration and category of rehabilitation; the normal categorisation ‘urban’ and ‘rural’ migrant he encapsulated under temporality. In comparison to the definition of the migrants from West Pakistan, a notable difference is the lack of any timeline being assigned to the latter. This was due to

¹⁶ The report also states how the BLC cases would be granted rehabilitation. ‘BLC’s may be readily granted rehabilitation on written prayer only… As such re-categorization from PL to RG or vice-versa and from BLC to PL should be under the approval of the Dy. Refugee Rehabilitation Commissioner only.’

¹⁷ A famous example is of the noted painter Ganesh Halui who described the pathetic life in Rajmahal Camp in Bihar and how, upset with the sheer neglect and state apathy, he alongwith the many other inmates of this camp returned to Howrah Station. He of course made it to an Art school in Kolkata, but many of his counterparts simply disappeared in the crowd of urban poor.
the difference in the migration pattern, but it can also be argued that the Hindus and Sikhs from West Pakistan were already seen as the natural responsibility of the Government of India. It is only in the post-1965 period that finally an undertaking was demanded from a migrant coming into India from West Pakistan that he will not claim any rehabilitation benefits from the Government of India and that he has the necessary support of some family member to look after him in India without being a liability on the Indian Government.¹⁸

The Displaced Muslim

Apart from defining the Hindu migrant as the displaced person, in the East the Muslims who had left their homes in West Bengal in the wake of communal riots in 1950 were also entitled to some rehabilitation as per the Delhi Pact of 1950. The West Bengal Administration of Evacuee Property Act (1951) and the setting up of the Evacuee Property Management Committee were genuine attempts to try to safeguard the interests of the Muslims in West Bengal. This was followed by the setting up of a Minority Commission, wherein the grievances of the Muslims would be redressed.

The definition of the ‘evacuee’ for the eastern region too, was significantly different from that for the West—

“Evacuee” shall be defined as a person who has left the province in question on or after 1st June 1947, and who declares his intention to return as soon as normal conditions are restored.¹⁹

¹⁸ The National Archives abound in files which record the demand for migration certificates from Hindus in West Pakistan during this period. See Annexure I of Chapter IV for one such case. However, I have also come across a few files where the supporting family member is not seen to be in a comfortable enough financial position to take up the responsibility of the incoming migrants, and hence the migration certificate is denied to the migrant. See, PII/282/352/67: Grant of MC to Shri Holomal and family. Here a migration certificate was denied to Shri Holomal and Family since the person who took their responsibility was, as per the findings of the Government, seen to be employed in a shop, having no independent business of his own: ‘He is not in a position to maintain the applicant and his family’ was the official sentence passed on Holomal and family in 1967. NAI, New Delhi.

¹⁹ Correspondence of Representatives of the Governments of East Bengal and West Bengal at Dacca on the 4th February 1948. West Bengal State Archives, Kolkata. In this file a detailed description of the setting up of an Evacuee Property Management Board is given. But references in the West Bengal Legislative Assembly Debates and corresponding newspapers do not show any evidence of any such Board being actually set up. In fact in this file itself it is clearly mentioned that such a Board will be set up in the districts only in ‘districts or areas from where a substantial exodus has taken place. These Boards will be set up only when it is established that there is a demand for their establishment. These Boards will assume management of properties only on the definite request of their owners.’ Adding further it was stated ‘Their function will be of a managerial character and they will not have the power to alienate the property entrusted to them for management. These boards shall be composed of the members of the minority community.’ [Emphasis added] Possibly because prior to 1950 there was no large-scale migration of the minorities either side of the border. It was the riots of 1950 which started the migration
But this definition underwent changes, till eventually in 1951, like his counterpart in north-India, the West Bengal Administration of Evacuee Property Act redefined the evacuee as one who had left for Pakistan.

The subsequent sections of this chapter will show that political rhetoric and ground realities were different. Hence, though technically the Muslims could get back their property, and rehabilitation in the east was not made dependent upon the elimination of the Muslim as it was in the west, in actual practice, at the bureaucratic level, strict vigilance was maintained over Muslims who were seen as suspect. The Government of West Bengal Intelligence Bureau files maintained records of such ‘suspect’ Muslims under a special file category—Mohd Affairs. To cite one instance, Nurul Hussain was found to be a member of the Muslim National Guard. He was accused of making inflammatory speeches against the Congress party members and thereby rousing Muslims in the district against the Government. Hence, a History-Sheet was maintained of his activities and restrictions on mobility were imposed.\(^{20}\) The official memo with regard to Nurul Hussain read:

| Name—Nur Hassan alias Nurul Hussain s/o Lt M Hussain of Chasiri, Rayerhati, Barisal and of Bouria and of Chencry, Kathalia (Barisal) |
| Party—MNG (Muslim National Guard) |
| Nature of Restriction—1. Will reside at his house and will pursue his ordinary avocation. 2. Shall not change his address with 24 hours previous intimation to police. 3. Shall not associate himself with anyone who is known or believed to be a member of an unlawful association. 4. He shall refrain from attending any parade or demonstration organised by any political party. |
| Date—25.2.1948 |
| Period—6 months |
| Order—DM’s order dt 25.2.1948 |
| Recommendadtion with etc—Secret information and interception show that he is connected with Pakistan and pulling string from behind at Bouria in keeping League activities alive. |
| Whether restriction etc—NO. |
| Remarks—….. |

process and it is thereafter that in the Annual Reports of the Ministry of Rehabilitation, West Bengal Legislative Assembly Debates, and newspapers that one comes across any action being taken vis-à-vis the rehabilitation of the Muslim displaced person. And though the definition of the ‘evacuee’ does undergo a significant change, yet, the spirit of this Conference is maintained in the final shape that the West Bengal Administration of Evacuee Property Act takes in 1951. Even the Evacuee Property Management Committee set up as its immediate aftermath follows the same guidelines as enunciated in this Conference—the basic tenet being the protection of the right to property of the minorities and holding such property in safe custody till the displaced person returned back and claimed it from the Custodian. This Act has been discussed in the subsequent sections of this chapter in greater detail.

\(^{20}\) F. No. 1147/47 Nurul Hussain s/o Mazum Hussain of chasiri, PS Rayerkatha distt Bakarganj and of Bouria, Howrah. WBSA, Kolkata.
In all such files we notice that a strict vigil was being kept on Muslim organisations, and any group meeting of the Muslims came under direct suspicion. For all such ‘suspect’ Muslims a common order was passed by the DIG, IB to the SP’s of the various districts in West Bengal:

1. Not to leave the jurisdiction of a police station where they are now residing without previous intimation to the O/C of the police station atleast 24 hours of their intending departure.
2. Not to associate with members of any unlawful association.
3. To refrain from attending any parade or demonstration organised by any political party.\textsuperscript{21}

Official correspondence clearly indicates that ‘some kind of lists of suspected Muslims is already maintained at every district headquarters by the District Intelligence Branch.’\textsuperscript{22}

Apart from keeping strict vigil on the activities of such ‘suspect’ Muslims, the return of Muslims from the other side was also to be controlled. This inspite of the stated policy from above of welcoming minorities back to their homes! A file note which seeks to discourage Muslim railway officers from coming back to their homes after changing their option from Pakistan Provisional to India Final. The reason given was that their jobs had already been given to incoming Hindu refugees, hence, it would now be difficult to re-employ the returning Muslims.\textsuperscript{23}

Finally, the big difference in the rehabilitation of Hindu migrants from East Pakistan and the attempt to rehabilitate the Muslim migrants from there was that restrictions on the entry of the latter was far more strict and final. It is only those Muslims who had been forced to migrate during the communal riots of 1950 and thus covered by the Delhi Pact that were entitled to any rehabilitation by the Government of India and Government of West Bengal. Pakistani Muslims, unlike Pakistani Hindus were not welcome as such. Hence, after the introduction of passports, the erstwhile soft border in Bengal was closed to the Muslim migrants. This led to a frantic increase in the influx of returning Muslims who made their last attempt to come back to their homeland. The cartoon below is representative of such an attitude.

\textsuperscript{21} Ibid. Letter to SP (Howrah) from DIG, IB (Government of WB) dtd. 24\textsuperscript{th} February 1948.
\textsuperscript{22} Letter from R Gupta (Secy to Government of WB) to S N Maitra, DM, Birbhum, dated 11\textsuperscript{th} June 1948, F. No… Instructions regarding employment of Muslims. WBSA, Kolkata.
\textsuperscript{23} No File No/1948, West Bengal State Archives.
The cartoon titled ‘Boomerang’ shows how Muslims from East Pakistan were trying to make the last attempt to enter India (marked in the signpost ‘Bharat’) before the ‘Passport’ boomerang can hit them. The boxes are marked ‘Bihar’, ‘Uttar Pradesh’ and ‘Paschim Banga’ (West Bengal). The line below the cartoon:

Passport pratha prabartito hoyvae purbahen Poorva Pakistane obosthankari mussalman muhajir dal shoshobesto hoiea ekhum bharotiyo unione nije nije grihe abhimuke pratabortan koritechen.

[With the introduction of the passport system, the Muslims who had migrated to East Pakistan are making all arrangements to come back to their homes in the Indian Union.]
Source: Jugantar, 20th October 1952

Whereas Hindus coming on Pakistani passports with Indian visas were given some respite and allowed entry into India after verification, the position vis-à-vis the Muslims coming to India on Pakistani passports was clear—No Entry:

Normal and legal methods to stop the return of Muslims to India will not work. Detection of these Muslims after their entry to India is practically useless. Prosecution involves us into a lot of expenses and we are not able to throw them out of India.24

Among the displaced Muslims a further distinction was made between those who left for Pakistan during the communal violence and those who abandoned their homes for a safe abode within the same district or state, but did not go to Pakistan. Whatever rehabilitation benefits were available to the displaced Muslim was reserved for the former category

---

24 IG Police note dated 31/1/1956, F. No… Re: Unlawful entry and unauthorized stay in India of Pakistani nationals. Emphasis added.

139
only. The latter, inspite of staying back, and thereby giving the strongest evidence of their ‘attachment’, was not brought under the purview of any such Act which sought to restore his lost property or provide him with some relief.

In the West, Muslims were altogether absent from any rehabilitation scheme. They found their place only in the Evacuee Property cases where their property was used for rehabilitating the Hindu and Sikh refugees coming from West Pakistan. By adding the further category of the ‘intending evacuee’ the Government further alienated the north-Indian Muslim.25

Relief/Rehabilitation/Regulation

Unlike the planned, phase-wise rehabilitation of the refugees in the West, the East witnessed a rehabilitation programme of an adhoc nature.26 In the East, phases of Government aid were followed by phases of denial. So, whereas, the earliest phase of migration from East Pakistan (1946-1949) saw minimum aid from the State Government and almost nil from the Central Government, it was the next phase of migration (1950) which actually saw both the governments wake up to the issue of migration in the East.27

The following sections have been arranged in the way which best describes the rehabilitation policy in the East. It is seen that the nation-state was moving slowly towards defining its territory and its people as it progressed more and more away from the year of Independence and Partition. As a corollary, the influx of migrants from East

---

25 Vazira Zamindar, *The Long Partition*. The Administration of Evacuee Property Act has been discussed in detail in the Chapter II of this dissertation as well.

26 As shown in chapter II, rehabilitation programme in the west stuck to the following equation: evacuation → relief measures → permanent rehabilitation → compensation for loss suffered.

27 Renuka Ray (Minister of Rehabilitation, Government of West Bengal) in reply to a question posed by Ambica Chakravarty re: ‘total amount of money sanctioned in each financial year by the Central Government in connection with the refugee rehabilitation work in West Bengal from the year of Partition to the present financial year (1954-55)’ statistically pointed out the record for each year as follows and it is seen that for 1947-1949, the contribution of Central Government was nil:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Amount (in lakhs)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1947-48</td>
<td>......</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948-49</td>
<td>......</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1949-50</td>
<td>300.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950-51</td>
<td>881.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951-52</td>
<td>1210.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1952-53</td>
<td>921.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1953-54</td>
<td>617.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1954-55</td>
<td>900.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4829.69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

West Bengal Legislative Assembly Debates, 1st September, 1955, p. 152
Pakistan was regulated even more strictly. This then explains the varied pattern of rehabilitation in the East.

**Relief to Rehabilitation [1946-50]**

Migration in the East began in the immediate aftermath of the Direct-Action Day violence in 1946 itself. But these first migrants belonged to the upper classes, and though often guided by the experience of actual violence, for many the decision to migrate was often politically motivated. This first batch of refugees was more or less capable of self-rehabilitation. Yet, among them there was a small minority which depended upon the Government, specially the ones who came after the Khulna riots of 1949. It was for them that the first relief measures were provided by the Government. The following section discusses setting up of relief camps in West Bengal, the impact of the West Bengal Land Development and Planning Act (1948), and the rehabilitation provided to these first migrants.

**Camp Life**

All migrants entered through the two border checkposts at Bongaon and Darshana. Here each refugee family was given different coloured border slips and then registered as a refugee. It were these slips which entitled them to rehabilitation benefits—

- Red ticket to those who needed no help from the Government and would simply disperse of themselves in Calcutta.
- Blue ticket to those who needed help from Government to pass through Calcutta and settle in other places.
- White tickets to those who wanted accommodation in Government camps.

In the initial stages, when migration was not such a serious problem, the Government did not really think of organising any such camp for the incoming refugees. But as the influx kept on increasing, the need for refugee camps also increased. There were quite a few

---

28 Thus the categorization of the refugee families as those headed by an able-bodied male, those headed by women and those of the permanent liability.

29 West Bengal Legislative Assembly Debates, Vol. III No. 1. 8th Feb-19th March 1951, p. 383.
relief camps set up in West Bengal for the refugees. But the two which stood out—in terms of size and population—were Dhubulia Camp and Cooper’s Camp.\(^{30}\)

Life in camp was abysmal. Morning schedule included queuing up for doles—dry dole or cash dole or a mix of both.\(^{31}\) During the day the men tried to look for jobs or alternative residence, whereas the women struggled to keep the home going. Camps were often the place of friction as well—Hiranmoy Bandopadhyay, the Rehabilitation Commissioner, cites numerous conflicts which took place over the quantity of dole received, the only source of water in the camp, and other arguments with the camp commandant and his staff. One such incident in Dhubulia Camp was reported in newspapers and recollected by Bandopadhyay in his memoir as well.\(^{32}\)

Medical facilities in the camps were inadequate. Newspaper reports cite the increasing cases of death in camps due to the lack of proper sanitation facilities therein. Death due to cholera was most rampant. But for those fortunate few who survived the cholera, there loomed another threat which was equally dangerous—predatory animals. Lack of privacy in the camp homes was yet another complaint many refugees had. With four to five families housed in the same tent/hut, it was simply difficult to maintain privacy.

In all, life in refugee camps was anything but welcoming. Many chose to circumvent this hardship. Long stay in camps also meant that greater emphasis was laid by the Government on the ‘relief’ phase rather than rehabilitation.\(^{33}\) This in turn was a result of the belief that the migration in East was of a temporary nature and that the migrants

---

\(^{30}\) The former was set up by the Government of India on 11\(^{th}\) March 1950 whereas the latter was set up by the Government of West Bengal exactly a month later on 11\(^{th}\) April 1951. It was the latter which ultimately became the more populous camp.

\(^{31}\) The doles distributed in Transit Camp (Sealdah Station) were as follows: cash dole of Rs 2 per head and dry dole of chire and gur to eat. The condition was relatively better in the Refugee Camps—cash dole of Rs 15 a month per adult and Rs 10 per child. Rice was secured by the Camp Commandant from outside the camp and sold at reduced rates for the camp inmates.

\(^{32}\) Major Adhip Mukherjee, the camp commandant, had prohibited any kind of gathering of the young boys in the camp premises after a stipulated time at evening. Hence, when he saw a group of boys holding a meeting, he immediately arrested them and took them to his office. This deeply enraged the refugees and they demanded the immediate release of the refugee boys. Mukherjee refused, and this agitated the refugees further. Seeing the situation go out of control the police opened fire whereby one of the refugee boys died and another was injured. This incident created a major backlash and Mukherjee was suspended from his job. This incident reflects the highly discordant relations existing in the camp.Hiranmoy Bandopadhyay, *Udvastu*, Calcutta: Bangiya Sahitya Samsad (1970), p 125.

\(^{33}\) Therefore, in more recent reports of the RRRD, it is observed how some refugees have stayed in the camps for more than ten years. This was once again a different situation in the east for in the west such relief camps were set up only for a short period, say two-three years.
would go back after the restoration of normal circumstances. It is only in the post-1954 phase of rehabilitation that it was finally realised migrants were here to stay. It was then decided to reduce the period of stay in camps and immediately shift the refugees to the designated rehabilitation sites in and outside West Bengal.

The West Bengal Land Development and Planning Act [1948]
The purpose of this Act was to ‘provide for the acquisition and development of land for public purposes’. As per the Act ‘public purpose’ included ‘the settlement of immigrants who have migrated into the State of West Bengal on account of circumstances beyond their control’, apart from other activities which included establishment of towns, model villages and agricultural colonies, improvement of agriculture, forestry, fisheries and industries and the creation of better living conditions in urban and rural areas. It was this umbrella function of the Act which was criticised by Jyoti Basu—

… this Bill, it seems to me, provides for everything under the sun… not only for the limited purpose, i.e. for the refugees who are pouring in West Bengal but for the people of West Bengal as a whole. Were it not so ambitious one would take this Bill seriously, if it was intended for a limited purpose and if the idea was that the provisions in the Bill would be carried out within a specified period of time.

Apart from its ambiguous nature, the implications of the Act on the minority population were a cause of concern for the Muslim members in the Assembly. Janab Khuda Baksh presented his reservations on the Bill in the following words—

[Once the Bill becomes an Act] any land which now also under the law includes water and surely includes a homestead, I believe, Government will have the power to take any land for settling the refugees primarily in a planned way, and also for other purposes, but, Sir, I have a sneaking fear that in the name of settling the refugees in a planned way, the provisions of this Bill might be used to dispossess the poor Muslims from their lands.

However, such fears were dismissed by the Chief Minister, Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy, and the Minister of Land and Revenue Department, Shri Bimal Chandra Sinha who had introduced this Act in the assembly, as ‘absolutely baseless’.

Despite serious criticism, this Act was passed and came into effect on 7th October 1948. According to this Act, any land could be acquired by the State Government by

---

34 Jyoti Basu, West Bengal Legislative Assembly Debates, 20th September 1948, p. 11.
36 Ibid. p. 13.
issuing a prior notice to the owner and then taking possession of the land in 30 days time. The owner would be permitted to present his case to the Collector who would, in turn, make an enquiry into the objection. If the objection was seen as just and appropriate, the land would be returned to him, else the State would go ahead with the process of acquisition. The owner would be paid compensation amount in terms of the market value of the land as on the 31st day of December 1946. The land so acquired would be used for the purpose of rehabilitating refugees by building colonies on such land. To cite just one among the numerous examples of such acquisitions of land found in the Calcutta Gazette—

Department of Land and Land Revenue, Land Development Acquisitions:
24 Parganas:- 13840 L.Dev. 9th December 1950—Whereas it appears to the Governor that land which is likely to be needed for a public purpose, viz, for the settlement of immigrants who have migrated into the State of West Bengal on account of circumstances beyond their control in the village Nurullapore, jurisdiction list no. 57, police station Jainagar, district 24 Parganas, it is hereby notified that for the above purpose a piece of land comprising cadastral survey plot nos. 212, 214, 228-29, 233, 236-38, 241-43, 682, 717, 728, and 744-746 and measuring more or less 6.89 acres, is likely to be required within the aforesaid village of Nurullapore.
The notification is made under the provisions of sec 4 of the WB Land Development and Planning Act, 1948 (WB Act XXI of 1948) to all whom it may concern.
In exercise of the power conferred by the aforesaid section, the Governor is pleased to authorise the Collector, 24 Parganas, for the time being engaged in the undertaking, with his officers, servants and workmen, to enter upon and survey the land and do all other acts required or permitted by that section.
A plan of the land may be inspected in the office of the Collector, 24 Parganas.

37 Fatapukuri in Jalpaiguri District was the first township built for the agricultural refugees. Using this very Act the Government of West Bengal acquired 1350 acres of land for the purpose of rehabilitating the refugees. Interestingly, as pointed out by Hiranmoy Bandopadhyay, this was one of those rare plots of land where the owner was more than willing to part with it for a noble cause. This is a point to be noted keeping in view the opposition of the landowners to such acquisition of land and the later-day bitter battles that were fought between the refugees and the landowners over the forcible occupation of land.

38 Notification in the Calcutta Gazette, 4th January 1951, Part I, p. 10. Similarly there are many such notifications for the acquisition of lands in the following districts—Hooghly, Nadia and 24 Parganas. There are also the rare notifications whereby 'the Governor is pleased to withdraw from the acquisition of 4.50 acres of land in mauza Panihati, jurisdiction list No. 10, police station Khardah, district 24 Parganas which was included in declaration 1984 L.Dev dated 27th February 1950, under section 6 of the WB Land Development and Planning Act (1948)...'
Rehabilitation of the Agricultural Refugees

There were four schemes drawn out for these refugees: Type Scheme, Union Board Scheme, Barujibi Scheme and Horticultural Scheme. All these schemes were meant to benefit the agricultural refugees, however, as pointed out by the Fact Finding Committee, only the Type Scheme proved to be successful. There were similar schemes for the non-agricultural refugees as well with a slight variation pertaining to their non-agricultural background.

Annual reports published by the Ministry of Rehabilitation show that these schemes failed miserably. In fact, as pointed out in the report for the year 1953-54 the Government acknowledged its failure in securing proper rehabilitation benefits for the agriculturist and non-agriculturist refugees:

Desertions from the colonies under the Union Board Scheme and the Variant of Union Board Scheme have been very heavy, and no further colonies are being established under the following schemes. Colonies under the horticultural scheme have also not yielded satisfactory results mainly on account of lack of markets as also lack of irrigation facilities and unsuitability of soil in some cases. These colonies are being readjusted and in future purely horticultural colonies will not ordinarily be established... [in future] only 'composite' colonies consisting mainly of agriculturists (together with Barujibis and horticulturists, wherever the soil is suitable) with a small proportion of non-agriculturists of different trades, should be set up. The idea would be to reproduce in these colonies the character of the population in a normal village. The existing Government-sponsored of agriculturists and non-agriculturists will also... be readjusted on these lines.

For more details on each of these schemes see P K Chakrabarti, Marginal Men, especially statistical analysis of the success and failure of these schemes. p. 241-244.

Refugees were given land acquired by the government or they were given loans to purchase land of their own choice. It was found that the scheme succeeded only in the latter case where the refugees chose their own land.

Under this scheme, a small number of refugee families were rehabilitated in the villages and thus got inducted into the mainstream of village life. The refugees were not given any loan for purchasing land, for it was believed they would work in cooperation with the local population in the village, and hence would not require any extra help from the Government. But all such hopes were quashed as refugees started deserting these villages in large numbers, citing the un-cooperative attitude of the locals.

These schemes were meant specifically for the betel-leaf cultivator refugee family or those who could be engaged in horticulture. But these schemes failed as well due to lack of proper marketing, inhospitable climate or soil, lack of irrigation facilities.

A Committee comprising of Ministers set up by the Government of West Bengal in 1952 to review the rehabilitation work done so far.

Rehabilitation for the Urban Refugees
The prime concern for resettling the urban refugee was three-fold—housing, employment and education. As mentioned in the previous chapter dealing with rehabilitation of refugees from West Pakistan, here also urban resettlement involved greater complications than rural resettlement.

In the East the problem was even more serious since in the absence of evacuee property, housing the urban migrant in West Bengal was going to be more difficult. Drawing inspiration from the Western region, the first option was the building of new townships. The Habra-Baigachi Township is a case in point. But it was not the only one—there were three more such townships built in West Bengal: Taherpur, Gayeshpur and Fulia. Of course, in terms of scale and organisation, these townships were a pale reflection of their so many counterparts in the West—Nilokheri and Faridabad being the most prominent and successful examples. However, the more general trend followed by the Government vis-à-vis the refugees from the East was to ‘provide building sites and/or loans and to leave the construction to the displaced persons themselves.’ In the East we also find a unique trend—the squatting of refugees over private and Government properties. Therefore, apart from building townships and granting house building loans, a very important work for the Government was the regularisation of such squatter colonies.

Finding employment for the refugees was another very difficult task for the Government, as employment opportunities were rather limited in the State:

- The region’s economy had been stretched to the limits during WW II
- The vacuum created in the economy by the Muslim out-migrants was meagre

Added to this was the fact that the first preference in Government jobs was given to the optees. The Employment Exchange was set up to provide employment to refugees Government openings and where such jobs could not be found refugees were encouraged to find self-employment through Technical and Vocational Training as provided by the

---

45 Though this was the concern for rural resettlement as well, yet, as can be seen, housing and employment were problems solved as one and the same in rural schemes and regarding education, there can be observed that it was not of any prime concern herein—except for primary schooling, emphasis on education was just about non-existent.

46 Ministry of Rehabilitation, Annual Report, 1953-54, p. 10. The report further notes how upto October 1953, 2.45 lakh houses were built by the displaced persons themselves whereas 13450 houses were built by the Government. Similarly each and every report of rehabilitation shows a similar pattern whereby the number of homes/tenements built by refugees vastly outnumbered those built by the Government.

47 Ibid.
Director General of Resettlement and Employment. Many such Vocational and Technical Training Centres were opened exclusively for the refugees. Besides, the Government distributed small trade loans to the refugees for setting up their own business.

Rehabilitation to Regulation [1950-58]

This phase marks an important change in the rehabilitation efforts in the East. It may be recollected that the relief phase in the Western region was over by 1950 and thereafter the efforts were towards rehabilitating the refugees, which too, was more or less complete by 1955. Thereafter, in the West the focus was on compensating the refugees for the material losses suffered. By 1950, the influx in the East had not been alarming enough and hence, a status quo was sought to be maintained in the East; all migration hereafter was sought to be discouraged. As mentioned before, the Khulna riots, however, led to a new wave of migration. Also, for the first time in the East this was a two-way migration. Even though aggrieved by the situation in East Pakistan, Prime Minister Nehru’s immediate concern was to stem the tide so that it doesn’t create a precedent for further influx. In all his correspondences with Dr B C Roy (Chief Minister of West Bengal) and Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan, Nehru warns them of the cataclysmic effect of this continuing influx on the political and economic scene of the two nation-states:

> The populations involved are enormous. It seems to me fantastic and totally impracticable to think in terms of these large migrations. It is equally impossible for us to look on, when millions of people live in a state of fear and apprehension and lack security, and there is constant danger of an eruption such as we have seen… It has become absolutely imperative for us to come to clear conclusions as to how we can give complete security of person and property and mind and work to people who live either in East or West Bengal.  

Hence, the next set of measures show a marked restraint on the part of the government in the rehabilitation of the refugees from East Pakistan. This section, therefore, discusses the Delhi Pact and its impact on regulating the influx and rehabilitation in the East. For those who still continued to pour in, the Government of West Bengal decided to take a stern stand and post-1954, strictly as a matter of policy, rehabilitation aid to incoming refugees would be provided only outside West Bengal. Much later, once again as a matter of policy, migration after 31st March 1958 was considered altogether illegal. Therefore,

---

towards the end of this section, we will discuss how influx of migrants was regulated in West Bengal. Thus, the title of this section—rehabilitation to regulation.\textsuperscript{49}

The Delhi Pact
The Nehru-Liaquat Ali Khan Pact, more popularly known as the Delhi Pact, was signed on 8\textsuperscript{th} April 1950 in New Delhi. The basic idea was to create such conditions in both the countries where the minorities would not feel insecure and not think of migrating to the other country. In fact, it was hoped that those who had come would go back. This was to be taken as the measure of success of the Pact.\textsuperscript{50}

A closer analysis, however, shows that the Pact failed in providing the much needed security to the minorities. Nehru was wrong in assuming that by proposing such palliative measures the problem in the East could be simply wished away.

The Main Provisions of the Pact:
The Pact aimed primarily at building confidence among the minorities and encouraging them to stay on in their respective countries. The Pact comprised seven sections/parts numbered A to G.\textsuperscript{51}

Part A of the agreement was of a general nature applicable to the whole of India and Pakistan. Its main emphasis was on ensuring a congenial environment for the minorities in their home country.\textsuperscript{52} But the more important point in this part of the Pact was the fixing of allegiances of the minorities to the respective State from where they were migrating:

\textsuperscript{49} Meanwhile, some of the refugees who had come in so far in the absence of adequate state aid, decided to take matters in their own hands, and thus came up the ‘squatter colonies’ in West Bengal. At first, the state deployed all means to bring these down. But in the face of strong opposition from the refugees, finally, the government had to give in. Hence, in this period, we also note the regularization of squatter colonies taking place in a phase-wise manner. The details of this struggle and the outcome will be discussed in the next chapter.

\textsuperscript{50} Nehru in reply to a question by a reporter regarding the criteria of success of the Agreement states—‘Obviously two of the most important criteria are (i) the preservation of order and protection of people, (ii) decrease in exodus.’ Statesman, 11.4.1950.

\textsuperscript{51} The Nehru-Liaquat Ali Khan Agreement dated 8\textsuperscript{th} April 1950 in P(PIV)125(62)/65, MEA, Pak II, P IV, NAI, New Delhi.

\textsuperscript{52} A solemn oath was taken to ‘ensure to the minorities throughout its territory, complete equality of citizenship, irrespective of religion, a full sense of security in respect of life, culture, property and personal honour, freedom of movement within each country and freedom of occupation, speech and worship, subject to law and morality…[minorities will have equal opportunities] to participate in the public life of their country, to hold political or other office, and to serve in their country’s civil and armed forces.’ Ibid.
Both Governments wish to emphasise that the allegiances and loyalty of the minorities is to the State of which they are citizens, and that it is to the Government of their own State that they should look for the redress of their grievances.\(^{55}\)

It is this point which was used by the members representing the interests of the Muslims in the West Bengal Legislative Assembly to emphasise that the incoming Hindu migrants should not be the first responsibility of the West Bengal Government. Their rehabilitation should not be done at the cost of the ‘citizens’ of West Bengal and India.\(^{54}\) This section also reflects the attempt of both the States to fix the loyalty and, as a corollary, the citizenship of its minorities in a somewhat permanent manner once and for all. That it failed to do so is of course another story.

Part B applied to Bengal alone and here the emphasis was mainly on providing freedom of movement and also security of transit. It is in this section that the clause of retention of ownership over immovable property was enshrined, i.e. ‘Rights of ownership in or occupancy of the immovable property of a migrant shall not be disturbed.’\(^{55}\) This clause affected the cause of rehabilitation in the East in at least two ways—first, migration of refugees was seen as a temporary affair for technically they had not been deprived of their ownership rights over immovable property in the other state, and second, refugees from East Pakistan, unlike their counterparts in the West, were denied compensation for the material losses suffered.

Parts C, E, and F dealt with the functional aspects of the agreement, i.e. how all parts of the agreement were to be actually put to practice. This involved the setting up of a Minority Commission in both the Bengals (as well as its functions and powers) where the minorities could appeal for a redressal of their complaints, and the setting up of an Enquiry Commission on Riots which would analyse what led to these riots, the extent of the damage, punish the guilty and restore looted property to their rightful owners. It

\(^{53}\) Ibid.

\(^{54}\) Syed Badruduja’s comments are worth noting—‘Let it not be misunderstood for a moment that we do in any way want to go against the genuine interests of the citizens of any other State, but the interests of the citizens of the State of West Bengal are much more grave, much more sacred and much more than the interests of any other people who came from across the border and unjustly occupied the lands of the citizens of this State.’ Emphasis added. Syed Badruduja, 11\(^{th}\) April 1951, WBLA, p. 283. The specific context within which he was speaking was the debate over the passing of the Rehabilitation of Displaced Persons and Eviction of Persons in Unauthorized Occupation of Land Act, 1951

could suggest suitable methods on how the occurrence of such riots in the future could be avoided.\textsuperscript{56}

There were other promises made as well—the Province of East Bengal and the States of West Bengal, Assam and Tripura would:\textsuperscript{57}

- Continue their efforts to restore normal conditions and shall take suitable measures to prevent recurrence of disorder;
- Set up immediately an agency with which representatives or the minority shall be associated, to assist in the recovery of abducted women\textsuperscript{58}
- Not recognise forced conversions… Those found guilty of converting people shall be punished.
- Set up a Commission of Enquiry at once to enquire into and report on the causes and extent of the recent disturbances and to make recommendations with a view to prevent the recrudescence of similar trouble in future.\textsuperscript{59}

These were some of the important points agreed upon by the two Prime Ministers in their attempt to restore peace in the troubled regions of Bengal and also to ensure the security of the minorities. In the months following the signing of the Pact, joint tours of the Chief Secretaries of the two countries and joint tours of the Minority ministers in Calcutta and Dhaka were undertaken. A Minority Commission was set up as per the norms prescribed in the agreement. A Search Service Bureau was also set up for the purpose of recovering abducted women.\textsuperscript{60} Thus, certainly some of the promises were fulfilled to an extent.

In broad terms, the Pact addressed primarily three concerns—provision of equal rights to the minorities, the recovery of the abducted women, and finally, the issue of

\textsuperscript{56} Thus all means were being employed to ensure that the minorities feel safe in their homeland.
\textsuperscript{57} All the points which follow were applicable to the Western region as well except for the setting up of Commission of Enquiry which was restricted to the three states: WB, Assam and Tripura.
\textsuperscript{58} Note this is the first instance of mention of abducted women and their recovery for the Eastern region in the post-Partition period. The Search Service Bureau was thus set up in Calcutta and Dhaka and so was the Dhaka Transit Home in the premises of the Indian High Commission at Dhaka. This has been discussed in great detail in Chapter V: Stree Parva of this dissertation.
\textsuperscript{59} A point to note, however, is that the report of this Commission was not published till as late as 1958 when we find the last mention of this Commission in the West Bengal Legislative Assembly Debates of the period. The Minister of Rehabilitation, Renuka Ray constantly reminded the members of the opposition that the report has not been published and hence she cannot comment upon it. I, too, failed in all my attempts to get this report. However, the constitution of its members and the calling for evidences from the public has been mentioned in the newspapers.
\textsuperscript{60} For details see Chapter V: Stree Parva: The Women’s Chapter.
property left behind by the migrants. It is the third point to which I turn.\textsuperscript{61} This was the most important point in the whole agreement—both in terms of the provisions made and also in terms of its consequences. First I will point out to what the Pact had to offer in this regard. Thereafter, I will look at the means adopted by West Bengal to put the principle into practice.

The Issue of the Property Left Behind:

According to the agreement—

- Rights of ownership in or occupancy of the immovable property of a migrant shall not be disturbed. If during his absence, such property is occupied by another person, it shall be returned to him provided that he comes back by 31\textsuperscript{st} December 1950. Where the migrant was a cultivating owner or tenant, the land shall be restored to him provided that he returns not later than the 31\textsuperscript{st} December 1950. In exceptional cases, if a Government considers that a migrant’s immoveable property cannot be restored to him, the matter shall be referred to the appropriate Minority Commission for advice.

- When restoration of immoveable property to the migrant who returns within the specified period is found not possible, the Government concerned shall take steps to rehabilitate him.

- That in case a migrant decides not to return, \textit{ownership of all his immoveable property shall continue to vest in him}\textsuperscript{62} and he shall have unrestricted right to dispose it off by sale, by exchange with an evacuee in the other country or otherwise. A Committee consisting of three representatives of the minority and presided over by a representative of Government shall act as trustees of the owner. The Committee shall be empowered to recover rent for such immoveable property according to law.\textsuperscript{63}

This is what the agreement noted in this regard. Now to see what was made out of it in actual practice.

\textsuperscript{61} The first has been discussed in some detail and the second point is part of Chapter Five.

\textsuperscript{62} Emphasis added. It is this clause which denied compensation of any kind to the migrants in the East—the plea given by the Government was that since the property belonged to the migrants in perpetuity, they would not be entitled to any compensation. However, the experiences of the migrants show how there was a blatant violation of these ‘perpetual rights over property’ in East Pakistan.

\textsuperscript{63} This Committee was the Evacuee Property Management Committee set up for the minorities in the East. The Act was the West Bengal Evacuee Property Management Act, 1951.
The West Bengal Administration of Evacuee Property Act, 1951

This Act was a direct result of the Delhi Pact. The Act sought to fulfil the following two objectives— the management of the evacuee properties as long as the evacuees were away, and its restoration to their rightful owners upon their return. To attain the first objective the Evacuee Property Management Committee would be set up. The Committee would comprise a President (who would have to be an officer of the State Government acting on behalf of the State Government) and three other members who would be appointed by the State Government representing the minority community. The functions of the Committee included the ‘good management and protection’ of the evacuee property which was vested in it, maintenance of audit accounts of the earnings, and supplying this information to the evacuee. This Committee tried to act as a genuine Custodian of such Evacuee Property. From a reading of the Act itself it can be seen that a lot of power rested with the evacuee—

- An evacuee whose property has vested in the Committee may nevertheless at any time dispose of such property by sale, exchange, gift, mortgage (not beyond usufructuary mortgage) or otherwise but not by way of lease.
- … the Committee shall not take charge of any evacuee property if the evacuee being the sole owner or the entire body of the co-sharer owners of such property, objects to the charge thereof being taken by the Committee and furnishes evidence to the satisfaction of the Committee that adequate arrangements have been made for the management and proper utilization thereof.
- … nothing in this section shall confer a right of occupancy on any person to whom any evacuee property is leased or let out by the Committee.

Further, even in the second objective of the Act, viz the restoration of the property to its original owner, it can be seen how once again the evacuee was placed quite favourably—

---

65 Though the Administration of Evacuee property (1950), applicable to whole of India except West Bengal, Assam and Tripura, also initially had started with a similar intention of protecting the properties of the Muslim evacuees in this region, however, in its final form it was anything but a custodian of such property—the Muslims stood to loose their property under the most arbitrary law and with the slightest of provocation. Discussed in detail in Chapter II ‘Rehabilitation of Refugees from West Pakistan’. 

152
An evacuee may at any time after he returns to West Bengal but not later than the appointed day [31.3.1951] apply in writing to the Committee for the restoration of any of his evacuee property of which the Committee has taken charge.

- [If the property is found to be] in wrongful use or occupation by any person, the Collector shall, on application made to him by the Committee or the evacuee, as the case may be, cause the possession of such property to be delivered to the Committee or to the evacuee as the case may be, and may use or cause to be used such force as may be necessary for the purpose. [such a person was also liable to pay for damages caused by such wrongful use or occupation]

A separate provision was made for those evacuees who could not return by 31 March 1951. Thus, an evacuee who could not return by the given date but had made it before 31 December 1953 could still apply in writing to the Committee for the restoration of the management over his evacuee property. The Committee, then, would issue a public notice calling for any objections on such restoration of property to the evacuee. If no objection was received, then the property would be restored to the evacuee. Thus, the evacuees in the Eastern region were in a favourable position compared to their counterparts in west.

Reception by the Muslim Representatives

This favourable position was recognised by the representatives of the Muslims in the State Assembly, as well. Janab Mudassir Hossain stated, ‘I congratulate the Government for bringing forward this Bill though it was a bit belated. … it fulfils all the conditions under which it would enable an evacuee who had gone over to Pakistan to come back here and be rehabilitated in his own home. That is the main object of the Bill. This is a commendable measure.’

---

66 It was this phrase which refugee leaders like Shri Jyoti Basu, Sibnath Bannerjee and others were against the use of. Jyoti Basu—‘[it is our suggestion] that force should not be used in the matter of evicting refugees occupying others’ premises in an unauthorized manner and that alternative accommodation should be found for them.’, WBLA, 22nd February 1951, p. 290.

67 For details on the negative consequences of the almost contemporary Administration of Evacuee Property Act (1950) see Vazira Zamindar, The Long Partition.

Thus, it was with a genuine sense of goodwill that this Act was passed, and it aroused a lot of hope among the displaced Muslims. But there was one major shortcoming in this Act which was the only point of critique by those members in the Assembly who genuinely wished for the rightful rehabilitation of the displaced Muslims. This shortcoming was that the Act simply did not provide for the restoration or management of properties of those Muslims who, in search of safety and as a temporary measure, migrated to another district or State within India but not to Pakistan.69

This ‘faank’ (gap) was pointed out to by several members of the Assembly, and was the only point of critique by the Muslim representatives. It was first pointed out by Charu Chandra Bhandari—‘jara bastuchyut hoyeche kintu Pakistan jayeni, poschimbonger annotra royecche ba Bharatborsher ono kono prodeshe giyeche—tader sombondhe ki hobe—ta kichu eii Biller modhye nai.’70 [those uprooted Muslims who did not leave for Pakistan what about them—this Bill does not mention.] Haripada Chatterjee brings out the irony of the situation in more succinct terms ‘Jara ono rashtre chole geyeche, tara phire eshe baari-ghar pabe aar jara nirjaton shoyeo nijer rashtri ache, ebong ki kore tader jomi-o-ghar baari phire pabe taar cheshta korche—tara eii ain bole eii ghor-bari jomi phire paabe na?’71 [those who have gone to another country can come back and recover their lost properties but those who have stayed back, even in the most trying conditions, making constant attempts to get back their homes and properties, will they, as per this Bill, not recover their properties?] In fact he tellingly remarks that is this punishment on account of their ‘crime’ of not leaving the country?

The map appended to this chapter shows the shift of Muslims towards the eastern border of West Bengal:72

---

69 They can be referred to as the internally displaced Muslims.
70 Charu Chandra Bhandari, WBLA, 21st February 1951 p. 262.
71 Haripada Chatterjee, WBLA, 21st February 1951 p. 265.
total population. This average is exceeded in three distinct zones of particularly heavy Muslim concentration, each consisting a chain of contiguous border police-stations. These zones are (1) Chopra-Islampur-Goalpokhar,\(^73\) (2) Kaliachak-Shamshirganj-Suti-Raghunathganji-Lalgola-Bhagwangola-Raninagar-Jalangi-Karimpur\(^74\) and (3) Sarupnagar-Baduria-Basirhat.\(^75\)

The census reports also mention a greater concentration of the Muslims in the rural countryside rather than urban areas (except in the case of Calcutta city): ‘The Muslims are strongly represented in the rural than in urban population in all the districts except Darjeeling, Purulia and of course Calcutta, which is entirely urban.’\(^76\)

The Government, however, retorted to such criticism regarding the internally displaced Muslim by stating that since the Bill was being introduced simultaneously in the two Bengals, and that too, after an agreement between the two countries over the common goals and objectives that should be incorporated within, no changes could be now made to it in one country without the agreement of the other. Also, it was stated that the problem of the internally displaced Muslim was to be resolved by the home Government only since they were not the responsibility of the other country, and, hence, beyond the scope of this Bill.\(^77\)

In such an explanation an interesting point which emerges is that Muslims—whether internally displaced or those who left for East Pakistan—both were seen as ‘nationals’ of the Indian state. This was one privilege denied to the many Muslims of north India as has been shown by Vazira Zamindar in her study of the ‘bureaucratic violence’ faced by the north-Indian Muslims during the post-Partition making and un-making of national identities in India. The arbitrary manner in which the national identities were being fixed upon the Muslims in that region—be it in the refugee action of pushing out Muslims by forcibly occupying their homes and claiming a ‘legitimate’ right in doing so, be it the

\(^{73}\) In West Dinajpur
\(^{74}\) In Murshidabad
\(^{75}\) In 24-Parganas
\(^{77}\) As pointed out by Dr B C Roy in his reply to such concerns of the members—‘such a person is not covered by this Bill... because each Province or each State is supposed to look after its own nationals... During mutual talks East Pakistan said that they had nothing to do with our nationals displaced but remaining in this State and that it was our job to look after them. [vice versa applied as well] and we cannot dictate to them what should be done with such displaced persons or how such displaced persons should be rehabilitated. On such a basis this Bill was prepared with mutual consent.’ Dr B C Roy, WBLA, 21\(^{st}\) February 1951 p. 266. Emphasis added.
Government action of introducing the binaries of the ‘evacuee’ (the alien) as opposed to the ‘displaced person’ (the citizen), or the strict regulation of entry and exit in the far more impermeable Western borders\textsuperscript{78} – was not replicated in the East.

In the Annual Report of the Ministry of Rehabilitation for the year 1956-57 it is noted that ‘The Government of West Bengal took steps to restore property of 12400 returning Muslim families. In 15500 cases, restoration has been effected by private negotiations, making a total of 27900 cases of restoration. Only 800 cases now remain in which the property of returning Muslims has to be restored and even in these cases effective action is being taken to ensure speedy restoration.’\textsuperscript{79}

Renuka Ray noted that ‘12320 applications were filed by the Muslims for restoration of property… Restoration was refused in 4933 cases either because the migrants had not returned in time or because they had already exchanged their properties. 1547 applicants got back their lands under the Evacuee Property Act and 4750 by amicable settlement.’\textsuperscript{80}

Similarly, statistics presented in the West Bengal Legislative Assembly show that such Muslims were also provided with a house-building loan of Rs 500, a house-repairing loan of Rs 100 and business loan of Rs 500. It is also mentioned that so far (till 1956) Rs. 206066 has been spent on relief measures and Rs 139625 was given as rehabilitation loans to the displaced Muslims.

By contrast, in the Western region it was taken for granted that it was evacuee property which would be instrumental in the rehabilitation of the incoming refugees. As mentioned in the previous chapter, evacuee property was one of the constituents of the compensation pool which had been created for the refugees from West Pakistan. There was no question of returning such property back to the evacuees.

The benefit of hindsight allows us to conclude that in following such a different policy in the East, Nehru and the Central Government were trying to reverse the wrongs done there. Also, as mentioned before, it was simply difficult for a state that had declared itself as a secular republic to disown its minorities. Thus, over three years after partition and at least a year after the declaration of the Indian Republic, the rehabilitation issue in

\textsuperscript{78} Compared to the borders in the East.
\textsuperscript{79} Annual Report, MOR, 1956-57 p. 11. What is noteworthy is that only the rehabilitation of the displaced Muslim in the East finds a mention. There is no such mention re: the displaced Muslim in the west.
\textsuperscript{80} Renuka Ray, West Bengal Legislative Assembly Debates, 7\textsuperscript{th} February 1953, p. 304.
the East could not simply be about the binaries of ‘refugee’ and ‘evacuee’, rather, it was about ‘majority’ and ‘minority’. Besides, the new developments in the subcontinent were also responsible for such an attitude—specially the sensitive issue of Kashmir. As noted by Hiranmoy Bandopadhyay, it was the need for maintaining a secular image of India and to win the confidence of Muslims with the larger aim to retain Kashmir that such measures were taken in West Bengal—


[It appears that this policy (secular ideals) was inspired not out of any high ideals et al, rather it was for purely political reasons and nothing else. The Kashmir issue had not emerged in a major way during the course of rehabilitating the refugees from Punjab. It did so when large numbers of refugees started coming from Bengal. This is when a secular outlook was adopted and the policy of exchange of population was abandoned.]

But it should be noted that there was a glaring difference in political rhetoric on the one hand and implementation at the bureaucratic level on the other. Thus, whereas the political debate on this issue went on harping over the fact that all measures to restore the confidence of the Muslims had to be taken and that these Muslims were a responsibility of the State, in practice just like in the Western region, in the East too the Muslims were subject to suspicion and constant vigilance. I have already cited an example from such files in the opening section of this chapter.

Thus, whereas, on the one hand, the internally displaced Muslims were never covered under this Act, on the other hand, there are no concrete evidences of complete rehabilitation of the returning Muslims either, apart from the occasional mention in the Annual Report or in some of the official files.

The Act, thus, can be seen to have had a very limited impact and was suited to no one’s needs in a complete sense. Instead, it put certain impediments to the process of rehabilitation itself. This it did in the following ways:

- The notion of perpetual ownership rights over property left behind denied the incoming migrants any compensation for loss of property—‘… under the

---

Nehru-Liaquat Agreement of 1950 there is no provision for the payment of compensation against properties left by migrants in East Pakistan.\(^{82}\)

- The internally displaced Muslims were not provided for by this Act. Therefore, yet another large section of the population was not rehabilitated on Government expense—in fact they were just plainly ignored.\(^ {83}\)
- With respect to the returning Muslims as well, day-to-day statistics of exodus published in the newspapers, and also the property classifieds prove that the exodus persisted.\(^ {84}\) Of those who came back some were restored their properties, and yet there were others who were reduced to a lesser existence in the ghettos.\(^ {85}\)

Reception by Refugee Representatives

Representatives of the refugees in the West Bengal Legislative Assembly, however, expressed their reservations about the Bill. A prominent voice among them was that of Jyoti Basu. His main point of contention was that though the Bill was well-meaning, yet, its provisions should not affect the incoming refugees. His main objection was to the use of ‘force’ to evict the refugees from the homes or lands of the returning Muslims—

I am in agreement with the objects of the Bill…[but since] we are dealing with people who have lost their homes… not on account of any natural disaster [rather on account of communal riots] that is why it is likely that their minds will be poisoned with communal virus. [therefore Government should see that] no force is used to evict them…\(^ {86}\)

---

\(^{82}\) This is common reply to all appeals made by the East Pakistan migrants whenever they appealed for compensation. Fr: R S Kapoor, Attaché, MEA, GOI; To: Rebati Ranjan Bhattacharjee, Calcutta, Dtd. 9th May 1962. NAI, New Delhi.

As noted in Chapter II of this dissertation compensation was an integral part of the rehabilitation programme in the West. Though never equivalent to the actual losses suffered, yet, it gave the much needed financial boost to the refugees in the West.

\(^{83}\) The dilemma they faced was that belonging to the minority community and one which was under constant vigilance it was difficult for them to present their demands as forcefully as the refugees did. These unfortunate people, too suffered in a manner similar to the incoming Hindu refugees, but unlike the latter they had no opportunity to voice their grievances. They were simply on the mercy of the handful of politicians representing them in the Assembly. An excellent work of fiction reflects this predicament of the displaced Muslim where pushed out of Bihar upon the creation of Pakistan and then once again pushed of East Pakistan upon the creation of Bangladesh, a group of Bihari Muslims seek the help of the local politician who in lieu of their precious votes promises to let them stay on undetected by the Indian State.

\(^{84}\) Annexure II


\(^{86}\) Jyoti Basu, 22nd February 1951 WBLA, p. 268
Further, he demanded that ‘the Government should also make arrangements for alternative accommodation for the vast majority of persons who are in occupation of such properties.’

But the argument from the Government side was that as per this law only one of the two—evacuee or the displaced person—could be accommodated. This dichotomous proposition was seen in the Western region as well where the rehabilitation of one invariably implied the dispossession of the other. With this Act, however, the Muslims in the East seemed to be placed much favourably than their counterparts in the West.

But not for long as the next piece of legislation passed barely two months later sought to reverse the benefits gained. Hence, if this Act was seen by the pro-refugee leaders as an ‘act of appeasement’ vis-à-vis the Muslims, the Act which followed it was seen by the members representing the Muslims as one which the Government was ‘coerced and bullied’ to pass. This Act was the Rehabilitation of Displaced Persons and The Eviction of Persons from Unauthorised Occupation of Land Act, 1951.

**Rehabilitation of Displaced Persons and the Eviction of Persons from Unauthorised Occupation of Land Act**

The Act

This act was meant ‘to provide for the rehabilitation of displaced persons and eviction of persons in unauthorised occupation of land.’ As per the provisions of the Act, an

---

87 Jyoti Basu, 22nd February 1951 WBLA, p. 290.
88 As noted by Tarapada Bandopadhyay—[I have visited several border regions in East Pakistan] dekhechi mussalman bhaijon khub sukhei ache, sheihane tara ‘liberal treatment’ pache ebong onek hinduke dhomok deouva hoche. Ebong mussalmaner photo dosh marjona kora hoche… Ami mantri mahashay ke bolchi tini jodi alpo ektu ‘appeasement’ korte chan korun… Eta shobetan janen je mussalmunder opor atyachaar hoyeni. Ami bolte chai je Government jodi ei ‘appeasement’ komon tahole shokoler-i ashirbad paben. [In my visits to the border region, I found the Muslims in a happy state, being given liberal treatment. In fact, the Muslims are threatening the Hindus who have come there. The mistakes made by the Muslims are being sidelined… I want to say to the Honourable Minister that appease the Muslims if you want to, but in some moderation…. It is known to all that the Muslims have not been ill-treated (here). I want to say to the government that if this policy of appeasement is reduced to a certain extent, they will earn the blessings of all.]

89 The Rehabilitation of Displaced Persons and The Eviction of Persons from Unauthorised Occupation of Land Act 1951 (as modified upto 1st April 1962), Government of West Bengal: Law Department, West Bengal Act XVI of 1951. [all citations of the Act in this section are taken from here].

The Act came into force on 15th June 1951 and was originally to remain in force till 31st March 1957. But with two subsequent Amendments in 1954 and 1961, it was extended first until 1961 and then finally till 31st March 1964.
owner of a land could approach the Competent Authority before 31st March 1957 for the eviction of persons in unauthorised occupation of his land subject to the limitation that it should be proved that such occupation was not done prior to 1st October 1946. The Competent Authority would then make enquiries and issue a notice to the occupant of the land asking him to show cause why he should not vacate the land and pay a suitable compensation to its original owner within thirty days of issuing the notice. If the answer was not found satisfactory then the CA could order for the eviction of such persons from the land and also fix the amount of compensation to be paid to the original owner of the land. The CA could, on his own discretion, send for the case to be tried in a civil court. If the occupant refused to vacate, the CA could order for the use of force.

This was how the original Bill was designed. But in the face of stiff resistance from refugees and their leaders, a very significant rejoinder to the Act was introduced in the form of Section 4 of the Act. As per this Clause, the refugees would not be evicted or asked to pay any compensation until the State Government provided him with alternative accommodation.

Yet another provision in this Act which sought to protect the refugees was in the role accepted by the State Government to ‘acquire any land or any part thereof for a public purpose.’ Such acquisition was to be made under the West Bengal Land Development and Planning Act (1948). The only safeguard guaranteed to the original owners of such land by the Government was that ‘no land shall be acquired in pursuance of this section except with the consent of the owner thereof if the owner is entirely dependent for shelter or livelihood on such land.’

The inclusion of Section 4 was, therefore, the first victory of the refugees against the Government. The refugee leaders were happy to a great extent with the inclusion of this

---

90 In fact, it was termed as the Eviction Bill, 1951. A change of title was also pressed upon by the refugees for it sounded quite intimidating. Thus, the title—‘Rehabilitation of Displaced Persons and the Eviction of Persons from Unauthorised Occupation of Land Act’.

91 A specific group—the Refugee Eviction Resistance Group—was formed under the leadership of Dr Prafulla Chandra Ghosh and Suresh Banerji to oppose any such eviction of refugees from lands which had been illegally occupied by them for the purpose of resettlement in West Bengal.

92 As per the Act, ‘public purpose’ meant rehabilitation of refugees. This was yet another hotly contested provision of the Act with the Muslims members arguing how the rehabilitation of refugees coming from another country could be deemed as ‘public purpose’ in this state.
clause in the Act. But the representatives of the Muslims voiced their opposition to the changed nature of the Act. They opposed the Act on the following grounds—

1. It was a violation of the ideals set in the Delhi Pact.
2. It created a sharper divide between the displaced Muslims returning from East Pakistan and the internally displaced Muslims.
3. It created a conflict of interest vis-à-vis Muslims on the one hand and incoming Hindu migrants on the other.

Thus, introducing the larger issue of loyalty and rights to citizenship into the rehabilitation debate. This will be discussed in the next section.

The refugee representatives in the Assembly, on the other hand, were happy to the extent that their agitation had borne some good results atleast. However, the larger issue of rehabilitation of refugees was still unsolved. Their grievances were as follows—

1. Alternative accommodation might not be as good and it was not advisable to displace the refugees all over again.
2. The impractical proposition made regarding compensation to be paid by the refugees.
3. The moving of civil courts for redressal was also seen as impractical by the refugee leaders keeping in mind the utter state of destitution that the refugees were in.

---

93 That the pro-refugee members were satisfied to a great extent with this Bill can be seen in the final analysis presented by Dr Suresh Banerjee who had been instrumental in bringing the necessary changes to the original Bill. Citing the amendments accepted by the Government he notes that certainly quite a few important ones were accepted—use of the term displaced person instead of bonafide refugees; that the Competent Authority should be a sessions Judge and not just someone from the State government; and finally to not use force as regards sec 3 of the Bill. However, he was disappointed that the most important demand—eviction of the refugees from their occupied lands only upon the provision of alternative land in the same vicinity was not agreed upon; thus, disrupting a sort of ‘samajik jibon’ (social setup) they had become used to. Most of the leaders were strongly against what they termed as ‘double displacement’, and it is this that they wanted to avoid. WBLA, 5th April 1951, p. 147.

94 Sibnath Banerjee, ‘[though the name of the Bill has changed from eviction to rehabilitation] the only rehabilitation that is thought of and contemplated in the Bill is that displaced person is allowed to stay where he is at present on the payment of consideration or premium or whatever it may be. But beyond that for his livelihood, for his job there is nothing mentioned in this Bill… that is not rehabilitation must be clear to everyone in this House.’ Sibnath Banerjee, 11th April 1951, WBLA, p. 277.

95 ‘Nobody knows as to how they will again build their houses, build their shops, how again they will rehabilitate themselves when they go on to new lands. No provision is there in this Bill…[unless the Government] try to work the Act in a humane manner there will be trouble because the refugees are determined that they shall not be refugees once again.’ Jyoti Basu, 11th April 1951 WBLA p. 278.
4. Doubt over land acquisition for the purpose of rehabilitation of refugees, since even after two years there was very little that had been done in this direction.

5. Finally, the leaders of leftist orientation refused to agree to the notion of rights over property and also compensation in lieu of property acquired.

Thus, we find that the opposition was divided over the Act, and this happened for the first time. The greater implication of this division was that it displayed in a latent manner the hard fact of rehabilitation—either the Muslims could be made happy or the incoming Hindu migrants. It was difficult to satisfy the claims of both since each of the two groups had different interests. This, then, leads to the discussion on the loyalty debate.

The Loyalty Debate:
We saw in the previous section how the immediate fallout of the Delhi Pact affected the rehabilitation efforts in the East. This section looks at how it affected the safeguarding of the minorities’ rights in India.

The changed nature of the Eviction Bill provoked a significant debate over the issue of whose loyalty, and thereby claims to citizenship was greater—the returning Muslims and internally displaced Muslims or the incoming Hindu refugees? As noted by Janab Khuda Buksh—

This Eviction Bill was originally designed to acquire the lands occupied by displaced persons of East Bengal and restore those lands to the owners of West Bengal—whether they are Muslims or Hindus that does not matter, whether they are rich or poor, that does not matter. That was the intention of Government… the Government was bullied and coerced into taking a different course of action than was originally proposed in the Bill. … this Bill was originally designed to supplement the Evacuee Property Bill...96

A closer analysis of this Act shows that it certainly violated the principles of the Delhi Pact—

- As per the agreement, minorities were the responsibility of the State from where they had migrated. With the promulgation of this Act, however, the State Government of West Bengal was making a definite programme for rehabilitating

---

the refugees. They were not going to be sent back as had been hoped in the agreement.\textsuperscript{97}

- By the provision of this Act the work of restoring properties to the returning Muslims would face a serious setback. The complicated process of filing for eviction or grant of compensation or, even worse, the long wait to get back the ‘occupied property’ till the migrant was provided with suitable alternative accommodation surely made the whole process rather slow.

Apart from stating that the Act violated the Delhi Pact, the next point made by the members was that the loyalty of the Muslims who stayed back (were internally displaced) was far greater than those who had left for Pakistan. It is their land and property which, they felt, should be safeguarded from the unauthorised occupation by the refugees. As noted by Charu Chandra Bhandari, though this Act did provide some protection to the properties of the ‘returning Muslims’, the internally displaced Muslims were simply not considered—‘\ldots jara barabar West Bengal-er kono jayegaye chilo, kimba Bihar ba UP chole giye chilo tader sambondhe ki bidhan hobe?\ldots why this discrimination? Kintu in the case of another displaced Muslim—tara more loyal; tara Pakistan chole jayei, tader somnondhe ki’\textsuperscript{98}

Finally, the members argued that the internally displaced Muslims had greater rights to citizenship than not only the returning Muslims but also from that of the incoming migrants. Syed Badrudujja suggested that Dr P C Ghosh and Dr Suresh Chandra Banerjee should go back to East Bengal and likewise encourage the migrants to go back as well and stay on there and ‘prove [to be] faithful citizens of the State, contributing according to their light and conviction to the political, to the social, to the moral, to the cultural advancement of their own motherland.’\textsuperscript{99}

\textsuperscript{97} What is also noteworthy is that this Act was passed barely a month after the West Bengal Evacuee Property Act (1951) which was more favourable to the returning Muslims and in fact had no provision for the rehabilitation of the incoming Hindu migrants.

\textsuperscript{98} [What about some law for those Muslims who migrated to Bihar or UP, but did not leave Indian Territory? There is this law for the Muslims who returned from East Pakistan, but what for the Muslims who stayed back, and who are thus, are more loyal?] Charu Chandra Bhandari, 10\textsuperscript{th} April 1951 West Bengal Legislative Assembly Debates, p. 231.

\textsuperscript{99} Syed Badrudujja, 10\textsuperscript{th} April 1951 West Bengal Legislative Assembly Debates, p.208. He also mentioned that he had convinced many of his fellow Muslims to return back to India inspite of all the hardships they faced here. Emphasis added.
Janab Khuda Bukhsh raised doubts over the loyalty of the incoming Hindu migrants—‘… in spite of the affidavit and the testimony sworn by them either before the Competent Authority or before others there is no guarantee, Sir, that they will continue to remain and will not go back to the place from where they came. [I ask the Chief Minister] how many people have signified their intention categorically to stay in this country… and that they will not turn their back to the province and go back from where they came.’ On the other hand the internally displaced Muslims, he argued, had proved their loyalty in a big way by not migrating out of India inspite of all the problems they faced here.

Condemning the Bill as a ‘Black Bill—just like the Rowlatt Bills’, Janab Muddassir Hussain stated that,

… the gentlemen who have come here from one region—from East Pakistan are displaced persons and you have made provisions for them. But for the other persons who are still in their homeland, in their motherland and who are citizens of India are—*bona fide* citizens of India—no provision has been made in this Bill… This is a defect which I cannot forget and in *rehabilitating the refugees from the other State, you make others who are your own people, who are your own kith and kin, who are your own citizens, homeless and who are wandering like vagabonds.*

Apart from seeing the Act as a violation of the Delhi Pact and also as a means to alienate the ‘citizens’ of this country in favour of those of the other, these members criticised the very purpose of the Act. According to them, land so acquired for the rehabilitation of refugees could not be described as land being acquired for ‘public purpose’. They argued how could the issue of rehabilitation of ‘citizens’ from the other country be considered as ‘public purpose’ in this country—‘please enlighten me on this point whether a ‘public purpose’ can be so defined as to include rehabilitation of those persons who are not the *real citizens of this State*, as they have come away from another State and another country, *at the expense of the citizens of this State.*’

---

100 Janab Khuda Bukhsh, 11<sup>th</sup> April 1951 WBLA p. 274. In fact this was a problem noted by Hiranmoy Bandopadhyay as well in his memoir where he pointed that among the many reasons for the failure of the rehabilitation programme in the east, one factor was also the element of uncertainty among the refugees. Hence, in the post-1952 rehabilitation phase, he noted that often after taking some rehabilitation benefits the refugees went back to their homes in East Pakistan, and this to and fro movement was more often than not economically motivated. p. 120

101 Janab Muddassir Hossain, 11<sup>th</sup> April 1951 WBLA, p. 278. Emphasis added.

102 As was mentioned in the Act

103 Syed Badrudduja, WBLA, 11<sup>th</sup> April 1951 p. 281. Emphasis added.
Therefore, it is in such criticism of the changed nature of the Eviction Bill and also of the failure of applying the Delhi Pact sincerely, that we notice the Muslim representatives staking a greater claim to citizenship of the resident Muslims in comparison to that of the incoming Hindu migrants. Such claims were not opposed by the refugee representatives. However, at the same time, they did not deny the rights of the refugees to rehabilitation, and likewise citizenship of the Indian state, either.

Defending the refugees’ act of forcibly occupying vacant lands in the State, Sibnath Banerjee noted that, ‘… these people are suffering and even if they are unreasonable at times, we must understand their feelings of frustration… they cannot always go by logic and limitation of law and if they violate the sanctity of rights of persons to property we should not accuse them and we must not think that Government was yielding to pressure.’ And though there were serious faults in the Bill, yet, he felt that it was one step forward for the Government in the attempt to solve the refugee problem in the State since it gave at least—‘some assurance that they will not be thrown away tomorrow, … that they may improve their dwellings and make other improvements and can live with some assurance in the land where they are living.’

Dr Suresh Chandra Banerjee argued that the members supporting the Muslim cause should not get unduly agitated by the Bill since, if implemented effectively by the Government, the Bill, even in its present form, was not in conflict with Muslim interests—the poor landowners would not be dispossessed of their lands, there was provision of compensation for land lost, and finally, the option of redressal of the grievances in the court of the Competent Authority were adequate safe-guards. But none of these explanations suited the leaders on the opposite side—how could a poor displaced Muslim afford the expenses of a civil court proceeding, how could the compensation be enough for sustaining him for the rest of the lifetime without the land?

Thus, the two groups were at loggerheads over this Bill. The Muslim members for the first time realised how the refugee issue was becoming a point of conflict between the otherwise united opposition to the Congress administration in the State. They also realised that in spite of secular ideals being upheld by the prominent leaders, the

---

104 Ibid. p. 228. Emphasis added.
105 Sibnath Banerjee, 11th April 1951 WBLA p. 278.
economics and politics of the problem suggested that the refugees had to be rehabilitated at the cost of the Muslims. This realisation is best explained in the words of Khuda Bukhsh—

[B C Roy] is working under limitation and had to yield to a section of the people interested in the welfare of refugees from across the border and who are not interested instead of their lip service to the displaced Muslims in this country—in the rehabilitation of these Muslims—otherwise along with their demand for the welfare and rehabilitation of the refugees they would have put forward side by side the claims of these displaced Muslims. Not only did they not do this but whatever was done they obstructed the rehabilitation of these Muslims and that is the irony of the situation… They have stampeded the Government into finishing this Bill and the Government has yielded to this stampeding process and coercion.106

Syed Badrudduja makes the government-created distinction between incoming Hindu refugees and the internally displaced Muslims even more clear in his observation that ‘No unjust usurpation or occupation of such [that of the internally displaced persons of this state] lands or houses could have been tolerated by any civilised government… Of course the Government finds it difficult when they have to reconcile the divergent claims and conflicting interest of two classes of people and ultimately this Government has yielded to the other side preferring to settle the claims of the non-citizens against the citizens of this state’107

Therefore, this group of members strongly opposed the Bill. Highlighting the differences between ‘this side’ and the other Badrudduja noted ‘that not a single amendment from this side of the House has been accepted by the Government.’108 Even if only one would have been accepted109 ‘this section of the house would have been satisfied… then there would have been no bitterness between West Bengal citizens and East Bengal refugees… the real representatives of the Muslims would have been satisfied.’110

106 Khuda Bukhsh, WBLA, 11th April 1951, p. 274.
107 Syed Badrudduja, WBLA, 11th April 1951 p. 280.
108 Syed Badrudduja, WBLA, 11th April 1951 p. 283
109 That of Charu Chandra Bhandari—to provide for the internally displaced Muslims.
110 Syed Badrudduja, WBLA, 11th April 1951 p. 283
Thus, the Delhi Pact, inspite of the noble intentions behind it, failed to reassure the minorities the safety of their life and property. The statistics on influx and exodus and property classifieds, too, are evidences to the contrary. The illustration below sums up the intention and the fallout of the Delhi Pact graphically. The grim faces of the Hindu migrant being asked to go back and the smirk in the faces of the Muslim bystanders in the East Pakistan border highlights that the former were far from being welcomed back. Interestingly, though the expression on the returning Muslim family, too, is not reassuring, there has been no depiction of their reception at the border. Thus, though in this period the Government tried to encourage the migrants to return to their homes, yet, the real situation was best known to the migrants themselves who just did not feel safe enough there.

The cartoon is titled as ‘Phire Chal Apon Ghore’, i.e. Let’s return to our own home. The signposts are marked as ‘Banpur’ and ‘Bongaon’ on the Indian side and ‘Darshana’ and ‘Benapole’ on the East Pakistani side. Source: Jugantar, 19th May 1950.

---

111 Annexure I and II
Policy of Regulation: Now a Refugee, Now an Illegal Migrant?!

The Delhi Pact was the one policy most elaborately framed for regulating influx in the East. However, it was neither the first step in this direction nor the last. The following section shows how the influx of migrants was regulated over the entire period 1948-71.

Those refugees who refused to stay in the camps set up by the Government were the first to be denied any significant rehabilitation assistance from the government. Though they were eligible for house-building loans and small business loans, however, in all official reports seen so far it is very clearly mentioned that the first priority in disbursement of such loans would be the camp residents.

The next to be excluded were those who were part of the ‘rehabilitable group’ in these camps itself. The decision taken was that

with effect from 13th December 1948 no able bodied male immigrant from East Bengal who is capable of earning his own living, in Government or other Camps would be given gratuitous relief for more than a week from the date of his arrival in such a camp. Such gratuitous relief, however, has been continued to be given to the families of the infirm male immigrants who had no other means of maintaining themselves or a female immigrant with no relative to support her and who could not earn her living, or a child under 12 years who had no relation to maintain him.

Statistics were used to show how the number of migrants receiving gratuitous relief from the Government had been reduced from ‘the staggering 200740’ (October 1948) to 29797 (April 1949). This would have been an otherwise commendable job had the refugees been rehabilitated satisfactorily, and thus a noted decrease in the number of dolees. But it was not because refugees were getting rehabilitated that the numbers were reducing, rather it was on account of such cost-cutting methods that the numbers showed a decline.

With the next phase of migration in 1950 on account of the magnitude of the problem such methods could not be implemented. The policy then, declared that only rehabilitation loans would be provided to these incoming migrants while rest of the work was to be done by the State Government. According to Mohanlal Saxena, Union Minister of Rehabilitation, refugees were coming simply out of fear and not any real compelling conditions. He felt that once the conditions normalised they would return back to their homes. Also, it was simply impossible to know the exact number of refugees coming in

---

112 the ‘able-bodied males’ and their families.
since migration just did not seem to end. Hence, such a policy was adopted. This policy was criticised by the refugee leaders, but the Centre believed that such a policy would act as a deterrent for further migration. It was also felt that after receiving some relief in these camps and with the conditions being restored to normalcy the refugees would go back. But soon Nehru was forced to recognise that the refugee problem in the East was here to stay.\textsuperscript{114}

The Government of West Bengal, too, decided to set a time limit to the rehabilitation of the camp refugees.\textsuperscript{115} All able-bodied male refugees would have to be rehabilitated by 30\textsuperscript{th} April 1951 and then the camps, except PL Camps/ Women’s Homes, would be closed down. The most common reason cited for the decision to close down camps was that prolonged stay of the refugees in the camps reduced their desire to become self-reliant and increasingly made them dependent upon Government aid.

It is in this period of urgency that all the above mentioned rural and urban rehabilitation programmes were designed for the camp inmates by the Government of West Bengal.\textsuperscript{116} Bandopadhyay makes an important observation here. The inmates of the Cooper’s Camp were unable to take advantage of these schemes since their camp was administered directly by the Government of India. The only rehabilitation offered here was settlement outside West Bengal. Two such settlements proved to be successful—Nainital and Andamans;\textsuperscript{117} the other sites proved to be total failures—Bihar, Orissa and Maharashtra. Therefore, refugees deserted these states in large numbers but the Government adopted a strict policy vis-à-vis these ‘deserter refugees’.

The measures discussed so far can be seen as persuasive means employed by the State to discourage migration. More strict regulations were formalised in the East only after the introduction of the passport and the Migration certificate as a compulsory travel document. Refugees would be given aid only if they produced the right documents. Earlier the necessary documents included—the variously coloured immigration tickets

\textsuperscript{114} It was, therefore, decided that the Centre would contribute more significantly and thus was set up the Coopers Camp which was run directly by the Central government for long till it was handed over to the State Government. The Centre also took up the responsibility of the Permanent Liability inmates.

\textsuperscript{115} Those outside the camps were given second priority and only relief provided was loans—small business loans, house-building loans and agricultural loans.

\textsuperscript{116} Discussed in the initial sections of this chapter re: rehabilitation of agricultural, non-agricultural and urban refugee.

\textsuperscript{117} Fertile soil, familiar landscape, and agricultural families sent here.
and in the post-1950 era it was the ‘border slip’. But for those who could not get these official documents, often a simple affidavit or, as was more common, the recommendation letter by a local MP/MLA would suffice. With the introduction of passports and migration certificates, more concrete proofs were introduced, as Dr B C Roy remarked sarcastically—‘… sometimes our friends [meaning the MP’s and MLA’s] are so kind-hearted that they give certificates even upon hearsay which sometimes puts us to difficulty.’

The Migrations Certificates were very difficult to obtain, and this was made so to reduce the liability of the Indian Government. In fact, refugees seeking MC’s would have to make an undertaking that they would not demand any relief or rehabilitation benefits from the Government.

The categories which were not entitled for the MC’s included:

1. Persons owning agricultural land or engaged in trade should not be given Migration Certificates unless there is risk to their lives.

2. Economic distress and middle class unemployment will not be considered as valid grounds for the grant of Migration Certificates.

3. Families residing in areas where there are large numbers of minority families are to be discouraged from migrating.

4. Persons living within a 5 mile belt of the Indo-Pak border should also be discouraged from migrating.

5. Boys and girls, proceeding to India for education, whose parents or guardians remain in East Pakistan, should not be given Migration Certificates.

6. Where the Chief Migration Officer feels that there is no pressing need for a person to migrate, he should try to persuade the person accordingly and, if the latter insists on going to India, he should be told to do so on a Pakistani Passport and Indian Visa.

---

118 Dr B C Roy, 28th September 1955 WBLA, p. 697.
119 Annexure IV: Copy of MC and the undertaking required.
120 ‘Regulating the issue of Migration Certificates to Hindu migrants from East Pakistan by the Deputy High Commissioner for India in Pakistan, Dacca…’Letter from MEA, New Delhi, India to the High Commissioner for India in Pakistan dated 11th July 1956. F. no. 29/2/56-PSP, MEA, NAI, New Delhi. All citations which follow are from this note.
121 I assume this is with the intention that those who are close to the borders would migrate to the Indian side during the troubled times but could also be the first to go back when conditions normalized.
122 Yet another instance of practicing the policy of persuasion to prevent the influx of migrants.
After defining who all were not entitled to the MC, the next set of rules laid down those who belonged to the First Priority category for the disbursal of the MC:

1. Orphans with no guardians in East Pakistan.
2. Unattached women and widows with no livelihood in East Pakistan.
3. Wives joining husbands in India.
4. Families living in areas considered unsafe, for example, in isolated pockets or where there is apprehension about abduction of girls or their elopement under influence.
5. Grown up girls going to India for marriage. (*The MC should in such a case be issued only to the girl concerned. Her family should not be given this priority only on the ground that a girl of the family is being married in India.*)

Second Priority:

1. Families who have disposed of their entire property in East Pakistan before 1\textsuperscript{st} April, 1956 with a view to migrating to India.
2. Members of split families part of which has already settled in India. (A family for this purpose will consist only of husband, wife and un-married sons and daughters and aged parents).
3. Persons whose near relatives on whom they are entirely dependent are in India.
4. Artisans, thrown out of employment in East Pakistan, who would be useful to India.

Third Priority:

All other cases which do not fall under the 1\textsuperscript{st} and 2\textsuperscript{nd} priorities mentioned above. Each such case should be judged on merits.\textsuperscript{123}

A careful study of the categories shows how the Government was limiting its own liability by putting a strict control over the issuance of the MC’s. As per the rules mentioned above, very few people could actually get the elusive MC, and that too, on time. At the same time the orders also clearly stated that it should be made clear to the applicants falling under categories 3 and 5 of First priority and 2 and 3 of Second

\textsuperscript{123} F. No. 29/2/56, MEA, NAI.
Priority that they would not be entitled to any relief or rehabilitation benefits in India. Thus, limiting further the liability of the Government.

But the refugees continued to pour in, often using forged Migration Certificates. In fact, newspaper reports show that in the months following the introduction of priority categories, many refugees who were denied these MC’s simply forged the certificates to enter West Bengal. They were granted the status of ‘vagrants’ by the Indian Government till any final decision was taken regarding their citizenship and their rights to rehabilitation assistance. Finally on 10th January 1957 these ‘vagrants’ were given rights to rehabilitation in West Bengal alongwith citizenship rights as well. Interestingly, a major reason for such liberal granting of citizenship rights to these ‘vagrants’ was that ‘their numbers compared to the total number of refugees receiving official rehabilitation assistance was not yet large enough to threaten to jeopardise the entire rehabilitation programme.’

Yet another way in which these migrants entered India was on the strength of MC’s with the declaration ‘Not to be rehabilitated’ mentioned therein. It was easier to get the MC if one declared that he/she would not demand rehabilitation assistance from the Government. Taking a cue from this, quite a few made this false declaration and upon entry into West Bengal appealed to the State for sympathetic consideration of their case. The State was then compelled to provide for them. But strict instructions were given to the DHC Dacca to henceforth make thorough enquiries into the background of the applicant before issuing him/her the MC.

Then there were those who came to India on the strength of Pakistani Passports with Indian visas. Though, such migration was not encouraged, yet, in this desperate situation the Government did make an exception and after much negotiation they were allowed entry into the Indian Dominion. However, a distinction was maintained vis-à-vis those who came with valid documents and those who came on such Pakistani passports with Indian visas on it. The latter category could not obtain Indian citizenship as promptly and

---

124 Ibid.
125 ‘30000 Migrants in India with Forged Certificates: Likely to be Granted Status of Bonafide Refugees Shortly’, Statesman, 10.1.1957
126 Annexure VI.
easily as those who came with valid documents like the Residential Permit or the Migration Certificate.\textsuperscript{127}

**Regulation to Dispersal [1954-71]**

The Governor of West Bengal in his inaugural speech spoke of the change in rehabilitation policy—‘we have to realise the basic fact that the truncated State of West Bengal with a very high density of population can no longer absorb any more refugees within its economy. It is the realisation of this stem fact that impelled the Central Government and my government to take the decision that migrants arriving in this State after June 1954 would be resettled in large groups in other States.’\textsuperscript{128} Renuka Ray had stated earlier ‘the rehabilitation of displaced persons in West Bengal had reached a saturation point’.\textsuperscript{129}

In the first phase refugees were sent to the States of Bihar, Orissa, United Provinces and Andamans. Whereas the scheme was a total failure in the first two States, the refugees did carve out a success story in the latter two. This was followed by sending refugees to Dandakaranya which was the most ambitious project taken up by the Government of India for rehabilitating the refugees from East Pakistan.

This policy of dispersal was severely criticised by the members of the opposition. As stated by Jyoti Basu, ‘There is something vitally wrong with these rehabilitation centres, with these refugee camps; otherwise how is it that there are such large-scale desertions by refugees again and again… [though Congress is the ruling party in all these states, yet] if you send out the refugees somewhere then they are not well received… they are not looked after by the Government there and hence sometime they have no alternative but to come back. That is why we say this is no solution of the problem just to send them out.’\textsuperscript{130}

Refugees too, did not look at such arbitrary dispersal favourably. The Satyagraha in Bettiah Camp marked the beginning of refugee resistance to such arbitrary rehabilitation

\textsuperscript{127} F. No. 11/53-PSP, MEA, ‘Hindu residents of East Pakistan who come on Pakistani passports and Indian visas and subsequently wish to settle down permanently in India.’ Details discussed in Chapter V.
\textsuperscript{128} Speech of governor, WBLA, 4\textsuperscript{th} June 1957 p. 9.
\textsuperscript{129} Renuka Ray, WBLA, 13\textsuperscript{th} July 1956 p. 375.
\textsuperscript{130} Basu, WBLA, 5\textsuperscript{th} June 1957 p. 66. The most common point of criticism was that the lands which had been provided by these States were of the worst quality—marshy, swampy and just uncultivable. It was also argued that the Government of West Bengal had not explored all options in West Bengal earnestly.
programmes. Bettiah was the largest of the many camps set up by the government of India for the East Pakistan refugees in states outside West Bengal. Initially it was a peaceful protest against the poor administration of the camps which denied the refugees basic essentials of life—adequate water supply, proper rations, medical facilities, proper sanitation and finally liveable hutments. But when even these basics were not provided, mass-scale desertion of the camps was resorted to by the refugees. Once again the stations in Howrah and Sealdah were crowded by these deserters. Renuka Ray spelt out the Government policy regarding the rehabilitation of the refugees in the post-1954 phase—‘if people do not go out of West Bengal they should expect no help from the Government… [rather] If they are able to settle themselves here and if they come forward for help by way of employment or business loan Government will do their best to help them—provided they do not want land where there is no land, or they do not want to go to camps where there is no accommodation, or they do not want sites for house-building.’

I now discuss the Dandakaranya project which represents, in a small way, the whole problem of rehabilitation in the East. So whether it is the hasty nature of the plan, the lack of cooperation between the Government of India and the Government of West Bengal and also the other States involved, the locals versus refugees problem, and finally, the poor administration of the project—Dandakaranya represents in every way the poor rehabilitation programme in the East.

**Dandakaranya**

By 1959 all camps in West Bengal were finally closed down and 35000 of the 45000 inmates of these camps identified as agriculturists and sent off to Dandakaranya. The remaining 10000 were rehabilitated in West Bengal itself.

The project envisaged the reclamation of about 1.5 lakh acres of land from the states of Madhya Pradesh and Orissa. Initially some land from Andhra Pradesh, too, was expected to be released, but the land was found unsuitable for agricultural purpose, and

---

131 See chapter IV of this dissertation pp. 207-211.
132 Renuka Ray, WBLA, 24th August 1956 p. 369. Answers to subsequent questions also show that camp refugees were not entitled to land purchase loans, and house-building loans, too, would be disbursed according to the ‘merits’ of the case.
hence, was excluded from the project. The region selected finally for rehabilitation purpose included the Koraput and Kalahandi region of Orissa and Bastar district of Madhya Pradesh involving 80000sq.miles area.

The Committee set up to analyse prospects of rehabilitation in this area had strongly recommended that ‘refugees should be moved into the area only after their representatives visit the locality and see the prevailing conditions. The testimony of the Government officials alone as to the suitability of the conditions of living and the work expected of the refugees would not be sufficient.’ However, refugee leaders were not involved in the process of selection of the site and this was yet another scheme simply imposed upon them. The only option then, left with the refugees was desertion, which occurred en masse immediately in the years following the settlement.

N R Hota identified the reasons for such large-scale desertion as follows:

- The inability of the Bengali refugees to adapt themselves to the new region. From the point of view of refugees, however, the reasons were poor living conditions, lack of arable land for cultivation, remote location and hostile attitude of the tribals.
- Desertions in 1965-66 were triggered off by persistent drought conditions prevailing in the Project area during these years.
- Desertions in 1972 were motivated by a desire to return to West Bengal on account of the creation of the new possibility of rehabilitation in Sunderbans.
- Finally, in 1978 the peak in the rate of desertion was reached on account of a new hope among the refugees seeing that at last ‘their Government’ had come to power, meaning the Communist Party which so far had supported the refugee cause all the way. In fact, it was the refugee issue which was seen as one of the major factors leading to the toppling of the Congress Government in West Bengal.

---

133 Bastar district now falls under Chhattisgarh state.
135 Annexure V.
136 Of course, how the Left Government after coming to power betrayed the refugees is a different subject matter altogether—especially the violence in Marichjhapi is a case in point. But even as it is seen today, the rehabilitation work in Bengal has made no great progress and is still proceeding at a crawling pace. Ross
Apart from Hota, the Estimates Committee of 1978 too, located similar causes for desertion from Dandakaranya. The common point, however, to be noted is that from the Government point of view, the main reason for the failure of this project was the inability of the Bengali refugee to adapt himself to the rigours of hard agricultural life. Thus, the blame primarily rested on the refugee who simply did not want to leave West Bengal and just wanted to survive on the easy doles without doing much hardwork. \textsuperscript{137} It is this perspective which fuelled the false contrast between the ‘hardy Punjabi migrant’ and the ‘lazy Bengali migrant’.

As noted in the Annual Report of Ministry of Rehabilitation (1961-62): ‘Throughout the year, activities in the various departments proceeded smoothly and the only reason why the results actually achieved were not greater was due to the poor response from displaced persons in camps in West Bengal to move to the project area for resettlement there.’ \textsuperscript{138}

That it was anything but true comes across clearly when one observes the success of the Bengali migrant in Andamans and Nainital. The main reason for success here and failure in Dandakaranya was the choice of land. If agriculturists are to be rehabilitated then the land chosen has to be appropriate, not the infertile and barren lands of Koraput, Kalahandi and Bastar. This was a major problem in the rehabilitation programmes in the east—lack of proper planning and also wrong choice of rehabilitation sites. In fact, such problems were noted by the Government as well in its initial reports:

A number of difficulties were encountered because of the poor communication in the area, absence of land records and surveys and other important data necessary for proper planning. Reluctance on the part of staff, both technical and administrative, to serve in this inhospitable region constituted another major difficulty in the preparation and implementation of the scheme. There were also some difficulties in regard to the release of land for reclamation and settlement of the displaced persons. \textsuperscript{139}

The friction between the states is also reflected in a small way in the whole planning of this project. The states—Madhya Pradesh and Orissa—chose to part with only the bad

\textsuperscript{137} Such an argument is found in all the government sponsored publications on the work of rehabilitation—Rao, \textit{The Story of Rehabilitation, Luthra, Rehabilitation.}
\textsuperscript{139} Annual Report, Ministry of Rehabilitation, p. 47.
lands for Dandakaranya. Lack of adequate cooperation from the other states was a common complaint by the Government of West Bengal even earlier—case of Assam which ultimately put a ban on the further influx of migrants into the State of Assam is a pointer to this mal practice in the East. The overall cooperation received (or probably coerced into by the Central government) by the states for the West Pakistan migrants stands in stark contrast to that received in the East.

Finally, the internal conflicts within the Government is highlighted in the fact that Saibal Gupta, the Rehabilitation Commissioner of the whole project, chose to resign from power citing his unhappiness over the way the project was being carried out.  

**Summing Up**

This chapter presented the rehabilitation policies as planned by the Government of India and Government of West Bengal for the refugees coming from East Pakistan. We tried to see whether these policies matched up to the broad definition of complete rehabilitation as provided by Prime Minister Nehru and Rehabilitation Minister Ajit Prasad Jais.  

It appears that the policies of the Government can be seen to have favoured the refugees at some times (acquisition of lands, regularisation of squatter colonies, and providing basic relief and rehabilitation measures) and hindered the progress at other times (the Delhi Pact and its fallout, the periodic restrictions on entry to the Indian side, and the dispersal of refugees to States out of West Bengal against their wishes, but more importantly without any real and genuine efforts at rehabilitation in those sites). In understanding these differing policies, especially when compared to those followed for the refugees coming from West Pakistan, the break from the norms and the lack of a sympathetic attitude of the State towards these refugees can be observed. In fact, by Government’s own admission, as noted by Jyoti Basu, until the first phase of rehabilitation measures (1948-1957) for the refugees from the East, barely 14% of refugees had been rehabilitated—‘As far as refugees are concerned my point is that there is an admission by the Government that only 14% -- if you talk of rehabilitation even in a limited sense—only 14% has been rehabilitated during these number of years. Is that the

---

140 More details on the fallout will be discussed in the next chapter.

141 Nehru on rehabilitation—‘[it involved] ’not only the setting up of the person somewhere but following him up and seeing that he fits in... The problem is not merely a financial one but essentially a social one.’ Similarly, Ajit Prasad Jain pointed out, ‘[rehabilitation] is the process of economic recovery of displaced persons leading ultimately to the disappearance of all distinction between them and other nationals.’
pace, is that the speed of development and is that the time-table you have adopted in rehabilitating the entire lot of refugees? I do not know how many ages it will take if this kind of speed is maintained.”

Later, P K Chakrabarti also noted that by the process of elimination and exclusion the Government had very few refugees to actually rehabilitate. But even this restricted number was not rehabilitated adequately. According to Chakrabarti’s calculation, between October 1946 to March 1958 a total of roughly 32 lakhs migrants came into India. Of these, as per Government policy discussed above, only those who sought shelter in Government camps were eligible for relief and rehabilitation benefits. Thus, of the 32 lakhs only 8 lakhs sought refuge in the camps with the remaining 24 lakhs left out of the ambit of proper rehabilitation from the Government. Still 15 lakhs of these non-campers did receive Type loans. Hence, in all 23 lakhs refugees got some kind of rehabilitation benefits. After calculating the total net increase in population of refugees and further influx in the post-1964 period, it was observed that of the total 80 lakhs refugee population (taking an average growth rate of 2%) only 23 lakhs were given some rehabilitation benefits, i.e. just 28% of the total refugee population which was far less compared to the rehabilitation of nearly 90% refugees coming from West Pakistan.

Not only were fewer refugees rehabilitated in the East, but also that rehabilitation started here very late. Even by the Government’s own assessment, as observed in the annual reports, it is stated that any serious attempt at rehabilitation in the Eastern region started only in the post 1957 stage. This then was the Government efforts made for the rehabilitation of the migrants coming from East Pakistan. The next chapter looks at the response of the refugees to these paltry and arbitrary rehabilitation efforts of the Government.

---

142 Basu, WBLA, 5th June 1957 p. 67
143 Loans to purchase Homestead plots, agricultural lands, tools, implements, cattle, and for house-building small trade and business loans as well.
144 P K Chakrabarti, *The marginal men*.
145 The argument given is that influx was always uncertain and hence concrete plans were difficult to develop for the fluctuating refugee population. At one point, even Bandopadhyay, who though has tried to present an otherwise fair picture of the efforts of the Government of West Bengal while being critical of the role of the government of India, notes that this to-and-fro movement and uncertainty of numbers remained the main obstacle in planning for the rehabilitation of the refugees. He notes that in the years 1951-1952 often the refugees simply took whatever doles they were entitled to and when conditions became better left for East Pakistan, where at this time there was a major economic crisis and even famine. p. 120. However, in saying so Bandopadhyay actually contradicts his previous observation that the refugees were here to stay and it was wrong on the part of Nehru and others in the Central government to think that the refugees would go back.
Annexure I
Classifieds
Sale of Property/Exchange of Property

Properties etc.

Exchange one building with garden, three bighas and some furniture at Faridpur town, near railway station with property in West Bengal. Write K Ghosh, 19/B, Tarak Dutta Road, Calcutta-19.

Wanted, a well established industrial concern and an excellent residential house in Dacca or Chittagong in exchange for first class properties in Calcutta, Darjeeling, Ranchi and Lucknow. Apply with full details. Box 3824. Statesman, Calcutta.

A pucca house, containing six big rooms with one well, and another house built with sheets, in East Pakistan, on main road very near to bazaar, at Netrakona, Mymensingh, to be exchanged for a house in Indian Dominion. Contact R N Chakravarty, ASM, Konnanagar, Hooghly or Manager, JBS and MA Co. Ltd, Jamshedpur.

For exchange, sale and purchase of properties consult Dost Mohammad Estate Ltd, 19 Zakariah Street, Calcutta.

---

146 Such classifieds are in abundance in the period immediately after the formalizing of the Delhi Pact. With travel restrictions relaxed to a great extent, and no immediate restrictions of sale or exchange of property, many found it advisable to dispose of the property and move to a safe abode in the other country. However, with the promulgation of the West Bengal Evacuee Property Act 1951, these advertisements become fewer in number possibly reflecting how it was becoming difficult to dispose of evacuee property. In fact going through the Statesman for the period January 1950 till December 1951, I observed that after 23rd February 1951 (when the West Bengal Evacuee Property Act was passed), there was a genuine reduction in such advertisements. Hence, it may be said that there was some immediate impact of the Act whereby such property could not be alienated as such, rather was probably brought under the Custodian.
### Annexure II

Migration Statistics for the Period--26\textsuperscript{th} April 1950\textsuperscript{147} –30\textsuperscript{th} March 1951:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Arrived in West Bengal [from East Pakistan]</th>
<th>Leaving West Bengal [for East Pakistan]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hindus</td>
<td>Muslims</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26\textsuperscript{th} April 1950</td>
<td>(r) 15807</td>
<td>404</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27\textsuperscript{th}</td>
<td>(r) 14844</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(a) 382</td>
<td>(s) 184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28\textsuperscript{th}</td>
<td>(r) 12859</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(a) 363</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29\textsuperscript{th}</td>
<td>(r) 13693</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(a) 395</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30\textsuperscript{th}</td>
<td>(r) 13757</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1\textsuperscript{st} May 1950</td>
<td>(r) 9866</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2\textsuperscript{nd}</td>
<td>(r) 13452</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3\textsuperscript{rd}</td>
<td>13643</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6\textsuperscript{th}</td>
<td>9544</td>
<td>2035</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7\textsuperscript{th}</td>
<td>13674</td>
<td>1302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8\textsuperscript{th}</td>
<td>9018</td>
<td>1988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9\textsuperscript{th}</td>
<td>8623</td>
<td>1098</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(a) 240</td>
<td>(a) 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10\textsuperscript{th}</td>
<td>3371</td>
<td>3487</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(a) 215</td>
<td>(a) 140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11\textsuperscript{th}</td>
<td>10246</td>
<td>1909</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(a) 171</td>
<td>(a) 76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12\textsuperscript{th}</td>
<td>10534</td>
<td>2508</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(a) 164</td>
<td>(a) 82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13\textsuperscript{th}</td>
<td>8336</td>
<td>1316</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(a) 153</td>
<td>(a) 93</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{147} The date from when the pact was officially put into practice. Prior to this date migration figures only show the number of Muslims leaving West Bengal and the number of Hindus arriving from East Pakistan. It was a period of communal rioting and with Pact also not in place, prior to this date, the figures for number of Muslims returning back to West Bengal or Hindus returning back to East Pakistan is not mentioned in official statistical reporting as noted above for the dates after 26.4.1950. as can be seen from the table, there was hardly a period when the influx of Hindus into and exodus of Muslims from West Bengal was on a decline, quite contrary to the claims being made by both the Governments. Interestingly, these are statistics released by the WB Government itself, so it is a bit surprising how they could argue for 'improving conditions'.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Number 1</th>
<th>Number 2</th>
<th>Number 3</th>
<th>Number 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14th June</td>
<td>9559</td>
<td>1694</td>
<td>3761</td>
<td>4815</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15th</td>
<td>9165</td>
<td>2501</td>
<td>6072</td>
<td>3248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16th</td>
<td>7843</td>
<td>2054</td>
<td>4821</td>
<td>3446</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17th</td>
<td>7758</td>
<td>2909</td>
<td>3672</td>
<td>4163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) 139</td>
<td>(a) 86</td>
<td>(a) 41</td>
<td>(a) 87</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19th</td>
<td>7454</td>
<td>2683</td>
<td>5196</td>
<td>3664</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) 125</td>
<td>(a) 75</td>
<td>(a) 36</td>
<td>(a) 125</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20th</td>
<td>9242</td>
<td>2088</td>
<td>4064</td>
<td>4864</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) 155</td>
<td>(a) 90</td>
<td>(a) 47</td>
<td>(a) 68</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21st</td>
<td>7549</td>
<td>3267</td>
<td>6296</td>
<td>3301</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22nd</td>
<td>7312</td>
<td>2407</td>
<td>4962</td>
<td>3157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) 72</td>
<td>(a) 55</td>
<td>(a) 35</td>
<td>(a) 91</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23rd</td>
<td>6972</td>
<td>3394</td>
<td>4229</td>
<td>4804</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) 94</td>
<td>(a) 94</td>
<td>(a) 53</td>
<td>(a) 144</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24th</td>
<td>8263</td>
<td>3072</td>
<td>4620</td>
<td>2920</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27th</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26th</td>
<td>8064</td>
<td>2835</td>
<td>5383</td>
<td>3074</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28th</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29th</td>
<td>6889</td>
<td>2232</td>
<td>4344</td>
<td>3076</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30th</td>
<td>8520</td>
<td>1605</td>
<td>3853</td>
<td>3768</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st June 1950</td>
<td>6038</td>
<td>3383</td>
<td>5789</td>
<td>2155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>119</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>71</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>6655</td>
<td>2033</td>
<td>4775</td>
<td>2612</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>7320</td>
<td>1625</td>
<td>3547</td>
<td>3991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th</td>
<td>6255</td>
<td>2133</td>
<td>4434</td>
<td>2670</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7th</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8th</td>
<td>7822</td>
<td>2973</td>
<td>5382</td>
<td>3172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14th</td>
<td>6779</td>
<td>2180</td>
<td>4771</td>
<td>3172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>111</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>73</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23rd</td>
<td>6698</td>
<td>1758</td>
<td>5771</td>
<td>3792</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23rd</td>
<td>9849</td>
<td>2454</td>
<td>4435</td>
<td>3543</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30th</td>
<td>9347</td>
<td>1770</td>
<td>6324</td>
<td>3202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>102</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>44</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Annexure III

Restoration of properties to returning Muslim migrants in West Bengal

Fr: Government of West Bengal, Home Department, Political Branch, CR Section, Calcutta
To: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi
Dtd: 26th December 1966

Sub: Progress of restoration of property to the returning Muslims migrants in different districts of West Bengal
[forwarding for information of the Government of India a statement showing the progress of restoration of property to the returning Muslim till the period upto June 1965 under West Bengal Evacuee Property Act, 1951]

### Districts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of valid applications</th>
<th>No. of cases rejected</th>
<th>No. of cases restored to possession</th>
<th>Total no. of cases (3+4)</th>
<th>No. of cases covered by Sec 5 (3) of the Evacuee Property Act</th>
<th>No. of cases pending</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bankura</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birbhum</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burdwan</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calcutta</td>
<td>1416</td>
<td>923</td>
<td>493</td>
<td>1416</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooch Behar</td>
<td>4704</td>
<td>563</td>
<td>4141</td>
<td>4704</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darjeeling</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hooghly</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Howrah</td>
<td>1241</td>
<td>1149</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>1240</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jalpaiguri</td>
<td>1197</td>
<td>926</td>
<td>271</td>
<td>1197</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malda</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murshidabad</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midnapore</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nadia</td>
<td>23755</td>
<td>16640</td>
<td>7115</td>
<td>23755</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 Parganas</td>
<td>1550</td>
<td>1321</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>1490</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West</td>
<td>1134</td>
<td>974</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>1134</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dunajpur</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>35364</strong></td>
<td><strong>22696</strong></td>
<td><strong>12606</strong></td>
<td><strong>35302</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summary:
- No. of valid applications—35364
- No. of effective applications (omitting those rejected)—12668
- No. of cases restored—12606
- % of restoration out of effective application—99.

---

148 P(PIV)286(1)65: Restoration of Property to returning Muslim migrants in West Bengal, MEA, Pak II, NAI, New Delhi.
Annexure IV

The Migration Certificate for Refugees coming from East Pakistan

(To be filled in Duplicate) Application (to be filled in and signed by the Head of Family) For A Migration Certificate
(Only to be filled in by persons of minority communities living in East Pakistan)

Name (Block Letters):
Age:
Occupation of the Applicant and adult male members of the family:
Father’s/Husband’s/ Guardian’s name and address:
Permanent Address in Pakistan (Village, Post Office, Police Station, and District):

Do you, or any of the members of your family, who intend to migrate along with you, hold any passports? If so, give number, date and place of issue in respect of each passport.

Are you staying in East Pakistan since 1947?

How many families belonging to the minority communities are there in your village at present?
How many families of minority communities have already migrated to India? Give approximate number, if exact number is not known.

Mention your near relatives permanently living in India (the term near relatives should include only the following relations: Father, Mother, Brother, Son, Daughter (married or unmarried):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No.</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Relationship</th>
<th>Whether Migrated to India and if so when</th>
<th>Whether received or receiving relief, rehabilitation assistance.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

10. Mention your near relatives in East Pakistan.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No.</th>
<th>Names of relatives</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Relationship</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

11. Have you or any member of our family been to India after Partition? If so, state:

Approximate date of visit | Reasons for visiting India | Address where you lived during that period

12. (a) Have you any immovable property in Pakistan? If so, give particulars and

149 Note only minority communities could fill in, i.e. apply for the MC. This implies that there was technically no way the displaced Muslim could return to his home in India after the introduction of Passports and Migration Certificates in 1952. emphasis added.
your share in it.
(b) What arrangement do you propose to make for its maintenance or disposal?
(c) Have you disposed of any of your immoveable property since Partition? If so give particulars, mentioning your share, and the prices obtained.

13. If you have disposed of your dwelling house in Pakistan, please state the name address, relationship, if any with the person to whom it has been transferred. Was the house owned and occupied by you jointly with any other person?

14. What place in India do you intend to go to at present?

15. Would you require any relief/rehabilitation assistance from Government on migration?

16. Would you be prepared to accept rehabilitation outside the states of West Bengal, Assam and Tripura?

17. Through which checkpost (Indian) do you want to pass?

18. Members of the applicant’s family who will migrate to India with him/her.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No.</th>
<th>Names of members</th>
<th>Relationship</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Literate or not</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>


20. Names and address of two referees who should be responsible persons of the locality.

Annexure IV (part ii)

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that I am willing to be rehabilitated in any part of India where the authorities in India might decide to send me and the members of my family.

Signature of the applicant

NB:
1. Applicants furnishing incorrect answers to questions are liable to be disqualified for the grant of a Migration Certificate.
2. The mere fulfilling of an application does not entitle the applicant to a Migration Certificate.
Annexure IV (part iii)

MIGRATION CERTIFICATE

IPV FORM 19A

Whereas by application No.________________ dated ___________________
Shri/ Smti _________________ of Village ________________ P.S ____________
District __________, son/daughter/wife/ widow of Shri ________________, aged
_____________ years, has requested for permission of the Government of India to migrate to
India and to settle down at ______________ in the district of _____________ in the State of
_____________.

2. And whereas permission has been accorded by the Government of India.

3. Accordingly this certificate is given to Shri/Smti __________ to authorise him/
   Her and the members of his/her family detailed below to enter India without a
   Passport through the checkpost situated at ___________ in the district or ____
   In the State of ____________.

4. A copy of this certificate should be surrendered to the Indian Immigration
   Checkpost at the time of entry.

Particulars of members of applicant’s family including himself.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No.</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Relationship</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dated …….195 .  
Signature of Issuing Authority

Photographs of the holder and all adult members of his family
### Annexure V

**Year-wise Settlement of Displaced Persons in Dandakaranya Project**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No. of families settled</th>
<th>No. of families deserted</th>
<th>Net no. of families settled</th>
<th>Progressive no. of families settled</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>1265</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>1265</td>
<td>1265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>1587</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1581</td>
<td>2846</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>2136</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2123</td>
<td>4969</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>1700</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1682</td>
<td>6651</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>693</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>682</td>
<td>7333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>2737</td>
<td>1181</td>
<td>1556</td>
<td>8889</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>2360</td>
<td>1859</td>
<td>501</td>
<td>9390</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>2040</td>
<td>669</td>
<td>1371</td>
<td>10761</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>1863</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1853</td>
<td>12614</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>1023</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>846</td>
<td>13460</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>1012</td>
<td>486</td>
<td>526</td>
<td>13986</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>2318</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>2222</td>
<td>16208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>3235</td>
<td>3428</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>16015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>1443</td>
<td>242</td>
<td>1201</td>
<td>17216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>831</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>701</td>
<td>17917</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>961</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>718</td>
<td>18635</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>1433</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>1351</td>
<td>19980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>1526</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>1317</td>
<td>21303</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upto April 1978</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>7895</td>
<td>7895</td>
<td>13408</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Annexure VI

Aid to migrants coming without Migration Certificates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S No</th>
<th>Month</th>
<th>1963 With Migration Certificate</th>
<th>1964 With Migration Certificate</th>
<th>1964 Without Migration Certificate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>January</td>
<td>763</td>
<td>5933</td>
<td>1794</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>February</td>
<td>1449</td>
<td>15163</td>
<td>6909</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>March</td>
<td>1465</td>
<td>44904</td>
<td>58291</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>April</td>
<td>991</td>
<td>52533</td>
<td>55659</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>May</td>
<td>1352</td>
<td>46637</td>
<td>34830</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>June</td>
<td>1487</td>
<td>38721</td>
<td>33178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>July</td>
<td>1388</td>
<td>48227</td>
<td>25240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>August</td>
<td>1307</td>
<td>16280</td>
<td>10660</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>September</td>
<td>937</td>
<td>29782</td>
<td>9221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>October</td>
<td>1345</td>
<td>33421</td>
<td>8332</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>November</td>
<td>1086</td>
<td>21270</td>
<td>8922</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>December</td>
<td>1031</td>
<td>29167</td>
<td>11625</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964 January</td>
<td>.....</td>
<td>20424</td>
<td>7425</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>13294</td>
<td>355182</td>
<td>272086</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table above shows that during the period of ‘illegal migration’, i.e. 1958-1963 very few MC’s were distributed. But with the violence in 1964 the Government realised it was futile to persuade the minorities to stay back. This explains the surge in the entry through MC’s. Those migrants coming without the MC’s are also not far behind in numbers, which means the minorities were truly desperate to come over to this side with whichever means possible. It should also be borne in mind that obtaining the MC’s was a cumbersome process, and as pointed in some of the MEA files, those coming with MC’s were subject to very strict checks in the border post by the Pakistani authorities. Hence, the migrants often came over on Pakistani passports with Indian visas to escape this inspection at the checkposts.

In reply to question from Birendra Narayan Rai re: how many migrants have come to India on the strength of MC’s and how many without it. The Minister of Rehabilitation presented the following statistics and replied that as per rule all these migrants were the responsibility of the Government of India and were therefore to be sent out of West Bengal for purpose of rehabilitation. In West Bengal they would be given some relief benefits for about 2/3 days whereafter they were sent off to Dandakaranya, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Madras and Orissa.

File note dtd 2.1.53—‘The current course for a member of the minority communities in East Bengal, who wishes to migrate to India is to obtain a Migration Certificate from our DHC, Dacca. It appears, however, that at the time of leaving Pakistan, migrants are subject to special searches and other harassments which persons traveling on Pakistani passport do not have to undergo.’ F. No11/53-PSP, IV, MEA, NAI, ‘Hindu residents of East Pakistan who came to India on Pakistani passports and Indian visas and subsequently wish to settle down permanently in India.’

150 In reply to question from Birendra Narayan Rai re: how many migrants have come to India on the strength of MC’s and how many without it. The Minister of Rehabilitation presented the following statistics and replied that as per rule all these migrants were the responsibility of the Government of India and were therefore to be sent out of West Bengal for purpose of rehabilitation. In West Bengal they would be given some relief benefits for about 2/3 days whereafter they were sent off to Dandakaranya, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Madras and Orissa.

151 File note dtd 2.1.53—‘The current course for a member of the minority communities in East Bengal, who wishes to migrate to India is to obtain a Migration Certificate from our DHC, Dacca. It appears, however, that at the time of leaving Pakistan, migrants are subject to special searches and other harassments which persons traveling on Pakistani passport do not have to undergo.’ F. No11/53-PSP, IV, MEA, NAI, ‘Hindu residents of East Pakistan who came to India on Pakistani passports and Indian visas and subsequently wish to settle down permanently in India.’