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Debunking the image of Sindhis as Refugees**Dr. Manju Lalwani Pathak***Associate Professor, Dept. of Economics, Smt. C.H.M. College, Ulhasnagar, Mumbai, (M.S.) India***Abstract**

The post-colonial states are the main agents of the movement of many people those got the refugee status. For India's independence, three community of India faced the brunt of power politics – Bengalis, Punjabis and Sindhis. Present paper deals with the issue whether the 'refugee status given to Sindhis' migrants in free India was correct. Paper traces the argument that Sindhis should not be given the 'refugee status' and tired to break their image of refugee in free India with the help of .definition of international organization as India does not have any definition and any laws for 'status of refugee'. The Sindhis who migrated to other countries like USA and Hongkong were also called refugees. This would be fair with them because being a Hindu they fled their country. But paper explains that it is hard to believe that Sindhis are considered as refugees in their own country. Paper has tried to construct a platform to break their stereotypical image of refugee.

Key Words: Refugee, outsider, debunking, stereotypical, image, identity, landlords, landless.

Introduction: There are several examples in the world where the huge influx of refugees is generated because of partition. UN Resolution 1947 says that the partition of Palestine risen 750000 Palestinian refugees in 1947 partition of India raised 5.5 million refugees, partition of Vietnam has risen one million refugees in 1960, ten million refugees were raised because of recent partition of Pakistan in Bangladesh division in 1970s, Cyprus partition resulted in the movement of 200000 refugees and many more.

The problem of refugee became more complicated after 1940s and many communities became stateless and then were rejected in their own country. This compelled them to cross the border of their own country which was the main reason to

get a refugee status especially in the above mentioned countries.

Scope: This article traces the problem of status of refugee to the people belong to any community but a clear focal area of the study is to break stereotypical image of Sindhis as "refugee."

Limitations: This study is limited to only Sindhi Community though Bengalis and Punjabis also faced the equal amount of trauma in free India but paper is limited to only Sindhis community.

Methodology: This study is based on secondary data. Secondary data have been collected for the details of Ulhasnagar and Sindh from reference book, journals, magazines, and reports of local governments' authority. Apart from this, author is working with the Sindhi

community, some discussions with the community also helped to author to write.

Construction: At the time of partition Bengalis and Punjabis also migrated to free India with Sindhis. Bengalis had a state to be called as their own, Punjabis too had a separate state but Sindhis never had a separate state to call as their own in free India because entire Sindhi which was the state for Sindhis in United India became a part of Pakistan due to independence. Sindh was given to Muslim community to form a new country for them. As Sindhis are Hindus they left the Sindh. They were rich landlords in Sindh, after migration to free India they became landless and then they called refugee too. In this regard Dr. Subhadra Anand has written in her book mentioning that as the rest of India was celebrating the event of independence, the people of Punjab, Sind and Bengal were faced with the trauma of abandoning their home. While Punjabis and Bengalis were able to retain their linguistic and ethnic identities in their newly formed states the Sindhis were to witness a crumbling of all their primordial traits and identities. An instant of historic decision changed the Sindhi landowners to refugees.

The first important sets of question are: who gave the status of refugee to Sindhis and why Sindhis had been called refugees? What was their fault to be addressed so? The Sindhis who migrated to other countries like USA and Hongkong were also called refugees. This would be fair with them because being a Hindu they fled their country. But paper explains that it is hard to believe that Sindhis are considered as refugees in their own country. Sindhis were

the part of united India. The decision of the political leaders made them stateless and when they came to other parts of free India, they labeled 'Refugees'. Whether a community should get the reward of 'refugee' for sacrificing their state for the freedom of their own country!

Paper has arguments to justify this. But it is necessary to mention few definitions of refugee by International organizations because Indian constitution has not accepted any particular definition for refugee still today. In international conventions Sir James C. Hathaway defines, "Only persons applying from outside their country of origin were eligible for refugee status. Manoj Kumar says that UN's Conference of Plenipotentiaries held in Geneva from 2nd to 25th July 1951, similarly 'outside the country' word was used for refugee as well as definition of United Nations General Assembly Official Records also mentions the word "new life in abroad". Sindhis were not from the outside of the country. T.N. Giri states India does not have specific definition and domestic laws on refugees. In absence of any laws, one has to follow the definitions given by international organizations. Then on what basis Sindhis were given refugee status.

Another issue is related to Sindhis those were in Bombay before independence. After partition all Sindhis were known as refugees, those never had been in Sindh before independence also. Prof. Karunakarn's study on Ulhasnagar (a town of Boamby in Thane Dist.) also stated that one should understand that the Sindhis who were in united India before partition cannot be termed refugees. It is very painful for any

community who is already living a peaceful life, and suddenly their status gets changed in a night. And ironically it was very difficult for the government to differentiate the Sindhis pre-partition and post partition.

Other important query is to know that how many Sindhi generations will still be called refugees in India because still today, many people consider them as outsiders though third, fourth and fifth generation's birth place is free India. Many say that Sindhis came from 'Pakistan' whereas truth is Sindhis came from Sindh which was integral part of united India. In a night, they became Pakistani?

Paper describes that due to geographical division of Sindh could not be a part of free India because that piece of land had Muslim majority, then it was the responsibility of Hindu Political leaders to decide a separate land for the Hindus of Sindh or to adopt certain policies before independence in favour of Sindhis settlement in free India – because the country was being divided on the basis of religion. If it was blunders of political partition for independence interest of the country but finally problems at receiving end faced by Sindhi. Why because they were minority in Sindh? They had to leave everything and empty had when they came to their own country in expectation of survival they lost their identity also.

If the demand a separate land for Sindhis was not viable option at that point of time due to the volatile situation of partition as independence for the country was prior, then they could have adopted the 'Voluntary Exchange Population' idea which had advised by Acharya J.B. Kriplani to

Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru. The idea of the voluntary exchange population would have added a unique theory of migration in history of Economics. Surely the fault did not lie with the Sindhis and other migrants but they faced a mental trauma for the lack of political will on both sides of the border.

Paper fiercely quarries the justice in Sindhis being labeled as refugee. It is really miserable to mention that some Sindhis who got the refugee status in free India; they have their birth certificate and school certificate with the country name India. Equally ironical is the case of their children who born in independent India after partition who are called outsiders by the natives. Paper finds the question mark on the role of media and other social groups of that time. Why no Sindhi leader, Hindu political leaders, social workers, journalists, editors who were involved in political discussion and publication of the Sindhis and other migration during that time, had taken objection to give refugee label to Sindhis? What should this political negligence be called? A political blunder, historical/political amnesia, silence or...?

Conclusion: Present paper concludes that the community who were landlords, rich, belongs to oldest civilization with great cultural heritage and glories well settled life. Becoming the martyr for India's freedom is one thing, but living with a subconscious insecurity till life with various socio-economic reconstruction, is another thing, at least they would have given the status of 'displaced people' than the 'refugee'. This is what the query of status of refugee for Sindhis is validated.

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