

ABSTRACT

In the postcolonial era, 'migrations' of various nature, aided and supported by faster means of travel, have put the two words —'roots' and 'routes'— in a position of contestation. As a result of migratory movements and displacements, the notion of one's place of belonging is contested and the issue of crossing the 'border' both literally and metaphorically — has often been foregrounded. Attempts are being made to interrogate the fixity of the 'border', which stands for artificially created barriers that prevent and limit movement. Among the various signifiers of border, the partition of India in 1947 is probably a recent example of the physical demarcation of place in the history of colonial imperialism. The event of partition caused a huge population displacement and left millions of people rootless and detached from their birthplace. The present study examines the impact of borders on the lives of the East Bengali migrants displaced due to partition and interrogates the notion of borders and boundaries caused due to the demarcation of spaces. The study problematises the notion of home, displacement, and resettlement with the help of the oral narratives of partition survivors who are resettled in a hitherto undocumented place, which is about 125kms from Kolkata, the capital of West Bengal, India. Since the past two decades scholars have brought in a major shift in partition historiography. From the textbook version which conformed to the views of traditional historians, a major shift occurred in understanding partition from the people's perspective. It is only then that the narratives of partition survivors were taken into account in order to arrive at a more meaningful conclusion of the after effects of partition. Through examining the narratives of non-elite migrants from an undocumented site of resettlement in West Bengal, namely Talbagicha, Kharagpur, the thesis show that partition-in-the-East was not a onetime but an ongoing process and argues that their attempt to replace themselves in the rehabilitation site can offer new understanding of home and nation.

Key Words: Space/Place, borders and boundaries, displacement, East Bengali Refugees.