

## **Chapter-II**

# **Relief and Rehabilitation Programmes: Nature and Extent**

## Chapter-II

### Relief and Rehabilitation Programmes: Nature and Extent

On 16<sup>th</sup> July, 1947 Mahatma Gandhi delivered a speech after his prayer in New Delhi where he told, 'There is the problem of those Hindus who for fear, imaginary or real, will have to leave their own homes in Pakistan. If hindrances are created in their daily work or movement or if they are treated as foreigners in their own land, then they will not be able to stay there. In that case, the duty of the adjoining province on this side of the border will be to accept them with both arms and extend to them all legitimate opportunities. They should be made to feel that they have not come to an alien land.'<sup>1</sup>

Jawaharlal Nehru also echoed in the same line and gave the similar assurance: 'Our duty to those, who will be in peril in East Bengal, will be to protect them in their own country and to give them shelter in our own country if there is no other way and the situation so demands.'<sup>2</sup>

#### I. The Influx and the Reaction of the Governments.

##### (A). Old Migrants: The First Phase (1947-1949):

It has already been noted in the introductory part that the Noakhali riot was the watershed from when the Hindus of eastern part of Bengal started migrating towards West Bengal. And the inflow of the refugees attained new pace when in September, 1948 the police action in Hyderabad took place and the exodus seemed to be unabated till the end of 1949. Though it is a tough task to ascertain the exact number of the migrants during this first phase i.e. from 1947-1949; but an idea of the extent of the influx can be drawn from the fact that by March, 1948 the number of displaced migrants had swelled to million.<sup>3</sup> By August 1949, the number of the incoming refugees who moved to Indian Union from East Bengal rose to about 2,000,000.<sup>4</sup> And at the end of 1949, 70, 000 refugees were residing in the various refugee camps in West Bengal.<sup>5</sup>

At the initial stage, the Central Government as well as the State Government of West Bengal did not take the refugee problem in West Bengal seriously. Because, both the Governments were of the opinion that the refugees from East Bengal were entering into West Bengal due to political disorder and baseless rumor and accordingly they must start a

return journey as soon as the normalcy would restore there. Besides, in the first few years there was a feeling that the 'two-Bengals' were a very different proposition and from the perspective of culture, language and tradition the two halves were so akin to each other that the migrants would ultimately return their own homes.<sup>6</sup> But very soon, it became evident that the refugees who entered West Bengal would not go back; rather their number would increase day by day. Under these circumstances the Government of India tried its best to stop such unexpected exodus from the amputated eastern part of the country. Accordingly, an Inter-Dominion Conference was held in Calcutta in April 1948 between K.C. Neogi and Ghulam Mohammad, the Rehabilitation Ministers of India and Pakistan respectively. In this conference, they took a joint vow to absorb every available measure to halt such exodus and create such environment that would discontinue the mass exodus in either side. They also took the decision to set up minority boards at the provincial and local levels in both the countries to build up confidence among the minorities. However, as time rolled on, the influx of the refugees from East Pakistan assumed an alarming level. After the failure of the Inter-Dominion conference to stop the influx of the East Bengali refugees, Nehru wrote a series of letters to Dr. Roy in response to his pleading for the Bengali refugees. Nehru's letter bore the vivid testimony regarding the clear indifference and total forgetfulness of the solemn assurance of accommodating the Bengali refugees in India. He wrote to Dr. Roy on 16<sup>th</sup> August 1948:

'I have your letter of August 4<sup>th</sup> about the influx from East Bengal. I realize your difficulties and naturally we should do what we can to help you. But as I told you long ago there is no reasonable solution of the problem if there is a large influx from East Bengal. That is why I have been terribly anxious throughout to prevent this, whatever might happen. I still think that every effort should be made to prevent it. I think that it was a very wrong thing for some of the Hindu leaders of East Bengal to come to West Bengal.'<sup>7</sup>

Later on Nehru wrote another letter in reply to Dr. Roy's letter (22 August 1948), where he expressed:

'I have been quite certain, right from the beginning that everything should be done to prevent Hindus in East Bengal from migrating to West Bengal. If that happened on a mass scale it would be disaster of the first magnitude. Running away is never solution to a problem... to the last I would try to check migration even if there is war.'<sup>8</sup>

Prime Minister Nehru thought that the refugees were running away from East Pakistan. But the fact was that the refugees were being compelled to make an uncertain journey towards West Bengal due to the reasons mentioned, that he did not want to understand.

Rather he tried to arrest the exodus by signing another Inter -Dominion Conference in December 1948 that was held in Delhi to take subsequent action on the steps under taken in the previous Conference. These attempts however, ended in vain and the Hindu refugees continued to abandon East Pakistan in order to take refuge in India especially in West Bengal. By the end of 1949 the influx of the refugees thinned down and thus, the first phase of the migration experienced a temporary halt.

The Central Government was of the opinion, as noted earlier, that the refugees who sought shelter into West Bengal would make a return journey as soon as normalcy would restore in East Pakistan. The Government of West Bengal also started thinking in the line of the Centre. And it was clear from the report of Dr. Prafulla Chandra Ghosh, the then Chief Minister of West Bengal. He apprised Nehru of the fact that the refugees would return their homes as soon as the situation became calm a bit.<sup>9</sup> But when it became clear that the refugees had come in the hope of living in West Bengal permanently, the Government of West Bengal fell into a great dilemma. The refugees from East Bengal started pouring into the Sealdah Station in thousands but the Government was not prepared to face such a problem instantly. At the same time, the Central Government was quite reluctant to accept that there was a refugee problem in West Bengal at all. In such a situation, the Government of West Bengal considered it necessary to undertake some initiatives to cope with the increasing number of displaced persons. Thus, the Government unsystematically adopted some initiatives to tackle the situation and not to allow it to go out of hand as the number of the refugees had already went over a million.<sup>10</sup>

The refugees from East Bengal who came by bus, train, ships etc. assembled first at the Sealdah Rail Station. They started pouring into the Station in thousands with a farlon expectation and a deep- seated nostalgia for the land they had left behind forever. From there they were taken to various refugee camps that were either hastily constructed or used earlier as military barracks especially during the time of Second World War. Some jute go-downs, came to be known as transit camps, were also used for the temporary accommodation of the refugees from East Bengal. However, the refugees had to wait for a quite long time to get them transferred to the camps meant for them. As thousands of refugees were pouring into the Sealdah Rail Station in a day and the machinery of the Government was not so developed that could vacate the Station of the refugees as it had to welcome fresh batches of refugees each day.

In the military barracks every refugee family was allotted a small space which marked out as their occupied area with the broken bricks and stones. In the camps there were arrangements for living twenty families in a single room. In such a situation, their privacy was beyond imagination. The number of the refugees was so high that the army barracks could not provide them the minimum required space. So, the Government tried to solve the problem by pitching old army tents for the refugees. But the tents generated an unbearable heat as these were pitched in the open. Attempts were made to supply water to the refugees by sinking tube-wells which again proved to be inadequate to their needs. The adult refugees got their dry food 'doles' of Rs 15 and the children refugees got Rs 10 per head per month. The refugees who entered into West Bengal in the first phase of migration (1947-50) they were of three distinct categories:<sup>11</sup>

(a) The refugees who were comparatively well-off and enthusiastic did not wait for the Government help. They relied completely on their own resources to get themselves rehabilitated and formed the first category of the refugees;

(b) The second class of the refugees did not have money but full energy. They did not seek shelter in the Government camps rather they tried to rehabilitate themselves by occupying deserted houses or fallow land. They made these places as their temporary abodes and took the responsibility of earning their livelihood by themselves;

(c) The refugees, who were poor, both in terms of money and mental strength and lacked the desire to stand on their own feet, belonged to the third category. It was these refugees who sought refuge in the Government camps.

At the initial stage the Central Government decided to give only relief not rehabilitation to the refugees who entered into West Bengal with the first wave. However, later on it had to change its mind and support the rehabilitation plan for the Bengali refugees.

### **(B). Old Migrants: The Second Phase (1950-1951)**

In January 1950, a serious communal riot engulfed the whole of East Bengal. The news of wide spread communal violence on the Namasudra Community by the Muslims in the Khulna District of East Pakistan reached Calcutta. The displaced Hindus also started pouring into West Bengal. Tales of inhuman atrocities on the East Bengali Hindus spread like wild fire in West Bengal that paved the way for the commencement of the chain

reaction of violence in West Bengal. Thus, the biggest exodus of the East Bengali Hindus began from the first week of February, 1950. Very soon, the riot spread to Rajshahi, Dacca, Barishal and Faridpur and other regions of East Bengal. The panic stricken refugees assembled at the border town of Bongaon, many thousands of refugees were waiting at railway stations, steamer stations, and Dacca Airport to cross over to India but there was no transport that could carry them to their desired destination. In such a critical moment, Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy, the then Chief Minister of West Bengal acted promptly who without waiting for any direction from the Central Government sent immediately 16 chartered planes and 15 big passenger steamers to rescue the stranded refugees from the Dacca Airport, Faridpur and Barishal Districts respectively.<sup>12</sup> In the face of such communal riot, a meeting between the Chief Secretaries of the two States was convened in Dacca. Sri Sukumar Sen took part in the meeting and coming back from East Bengal he hinted that a huge mass of the refugees was going to hit West Bengal that may be even 10 lakhs.<sup>13</sup>

Very soon, that prediction became a reality. The Government of West Bengal took the decision to receive the refugees in the transit camps<sup>14</sup> at Bongaon and Darshana. Both of these camps situated on the Indian side of the border. The refugees were given certificates, which later came to be known as border slips, to the effect that they were displaced persons and thereby entitled to take shelter in a Government relief camps. Hence, till March 31, 1950, 823,000 displaced Hindus left East Bengal and sought refuge into the various states of India. Of those refugees 643,000 came to West Bengal, 80,000 to Assam and 100,000 to Tripura.<sup>15</sup>

The unabated flow of the refugees in a great number alarmed the Central Government. It no longer preached homilies and sit pretty. Accordingly, Mohonlal Saxena, Central Rehabilitation Minister, came to Calcutta and held a meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> March, 1950 with the representatives of West Bengal, Tripura, Assam, Bihar and Orissa Governments. Some distinguished persons like Dr. Meghnath Saha was also invited in the meeting. In this meeting Saxena made it clear that the objective of the meeting was to communicate the decision, regarding the refugees from East Pakistan, arrived at in Delhi. He continued and expressed that the Central Government would provide only relief not rehabilitation to the new refugees and thus they would be accommodated in the relief camps temporarily. He added some reasons for such decision:<sup>16</sup>

This time, those who had left East Bengal, they left due to fear of their lives and hence, when peace would be restored there they might want to go back due to the attraction to their abandoned property. Thus, the question of rehabilitation, in such a situation did not arise. The influx had occurred all of a sudden and it was impossible to guess what could be the exact dimension of the problem. So, it was not possible to prepare a plan for rehabilitation at this moment.

But both of these two arguments were so weak and thus, appeared no better than a special pleading for a weak case in a court of law to the assembled members. Dr. Meghnath Saha protested against this discriminatory policy. He expressed that whatever arguments were being shown against the rehabilitation of the new refugees were solely weak and it would be unjust on the part of the Indian Government if it refused to rehabilitate them. He again reminded Saxena of the promises given to the Hindus of East and West Pakistan by the national leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru,<sup>17</sup> Mahatma Gandhi and others. Refusal of giving rehabilitation to the new refugees would amount to a breach of promise repeatedly given by the nationalist leaders before the Partition of Punjab and Bengal.

Mr. Saxena could not reply in the face of Dr. Saha's argument and he simply came to communicate that the Central Government's responsibility to the displaced Bengali refugees was relief not rehabilitation. He estimated that among the new refugees who would come from East Bengal around two lakhs would fully depend on the Government. Among these two lakhs of refugees, it was fixed that, Tripura would take the responsibility of 25,000 refugees, Bihar would take the responsibility of 50,000 refugees, Orissa would take charge of 25,000 refugees and the West Bengal Government would take the responsibility of remaining 1,00,000 refugees.<sup>18</sup>

Though the Central Government refused to take the responsibility of rehabilitation but agreed to bear the expenses of the relief for the new refugees.<sup>19</sup> He also suggested establishing the relief camps in the border areas so that the refugees could make an easy and quick return to their homes after peace restored in East Pakistan. According to this decision many camps were constructed at various places such as Dhubulia, Fulia, Ghusrri and the most important among those was Cooper's Camp. But the refugees were not sent to these camps directly. After providing border-slip they were moved to Sealdah Station and they had to stay there until they were taken to a new kind of camp called transit camp. From these transit camps the refugees were sent to various relief camps. Thus, the transit

camps were the half-way houses between the Sealdah Station and relief camps. But originally the transit camps were requisitioned go-downs of jute mills situated on the both sides of the river Ganges.

When in 1950 the influx of the refugees assumed an alarming proportion the Central Government took the decision to open the branch of a Central Rehabilitation Ministry in Calcutta which was placed under the supervision of the Joint Secretariat. And a Vice-Secretary of the Department was also appointed in the Calcutta Branch to assist him. B.G. Rao took the responsibility of this branch office as Joint Secretary-in-Charge.

It had been fixed that those refugees who had entered into West Bengal in the second phase, a certain section of them would be sent to the relief camps situated in Bihar and Orissa. So, the Government of West Bengal pleaded to the Central Government to take responsibility of those refugees straightway who would be sent to these places. The Central Government accepted the proposal and the Cooper's Camp was selected as the midway asylum for those refugees who would be sent to the relief camps of Bihar and Orissa. It was fixed that those refugees who were to be moved to the Cooper's Camp, very soon they would be sent to the relief camps of Bihar and Orissa. It was the second largest camp in terms of the number of the refugees just after Dhubulia; where at times the number of the refugees reached 70,000. In Cooper's Camp more than 40, 000 refugees could live at a time.<sup>20</sup>

As noted earlier that the organized killing of the Hindus in East Bengal created a chain of reaction in West Bengal also. As a result, the minorities of West Bengal felt insecure and started their journey towards East Pakistan. The situation in East Pakistan turned so hostile that according to Government figures over 50,000 Hindus were slaughtered and thousands of women were raped or abducted<sup>21</sup> 'with the direct connivance of the Pakistan Government.'<sup>22</sup> As a reaction to it, the Hindus of West Bengal launched a savage attack on the Muslims that led to the out flow of the Muslims from this part of the soil. Though, it is beyond possibility to provide an exact data regarding the number of the Muslims who fled West Bengal but the Pakistan Census in 1951, counted 700,000 Muslim '*Muhajirs*'<sup>23</sup> in East Bengal, two-thirds of whom i.e. 486,000 were regarded to be refugees from West Bengal.<sup>24</sup> Thus, during this time a two-way traffic of evacuees started and there appeared a probability of the natural solution of the refugee problem as happened in East Punjab, through a non-official exchange of population and property. The process however, came to

a halt very soon as the Central Government stood on the way. In case of West Bengal Nehru was against such exchange of population and property. Because by then Kashmir had become an apple of discord between India and Pakistan and also an international issue as Nehru brought the Kashmir problem to the UNO when Pakistan tried to capture it forcibly. Thus, perhaps, it became an urgent necessity for Nehru to maintain India's secular image by not allowing such an exchange of population and property.<sup>25</sup> Nehru argued, 'The fact that a man is Muslim, does not make him a non-national... To say a group of Indian nationals that we shall push them out because some people elsewhere are not behaving as they should is something which has no justification in law or equity. It strikes at the root of the secular state that we claim to be. We can't just do it whatever the consequences.'<sup>26</sup>

Dr. Shyamaprasad Mukherjee was in favour of the exchange of the population and property between the two halves of Bengal. B.R. Ambedkar, the architect of Modern Indian Constitution, long before the Partition of India, in 1940, clarified that it is beyond doubt that the transfer of minorities is the only lasting remedy for communal peace. On 23<sup>rd</sup> February 1950, there was a heated debate<sup>27</sup> in the Parliament between Shyamaprasad Mukherjee, the then Industry and Supply Minister and Jawaharlal Nehru, the Prime Minister of India. The debate goes thus -Jawaharlal Nehru-'this (exchange of population) proposal was something which was completely contradictory, to our political, economic, social and spiritual principals' there was another greater principle related to it. That was the question of our breach of trust.' In reply Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherjee said, 'when Pandit Nehru himself arranged the exchange of population, it seems, then he had kept question of breach of trust in the cold-storage. At the present moment it would be proper to confine the question of breach of trust in the cold storage once more and face the reality like an experienced politician.' But Nehru could not be moved from his point and thus, Mukherjee's reasoning fell on deaf ears. In this way, Nehru interrupted the natural solution of the problem through a two-way traffic of the evacuees in 1950. Rather, he was confident enough that he could stop the influx of the refugees by signing another agreement with the Pakistani authority. Accordingly, on 8<sup>th</sup> April 1950 the Nehru-Liaquat Pact was signed between Jawaharlal Nehru and Liaquat Ali, the Prime Ministers of India and Pakistan respectively, to create a sense of security among the minorities and discourage their exodus from either side by jointly reassuring the right of equality in respect of citizenship. The Pact partially made movement freer, lessened harassment by

enforcement officials, and aided people to bring in their movable properties. But in practice, this Pact again failed to induce verve into the minorities of East Pakistan.

After a few months of signing the Pact a Minority Convention of the East Bengal Hindus was held at Mymensingh that challenged the Pakistani authorities to disclose their intention whether the minorities were wanted here at all or not and raised a series of demands such as special courts for the punishments of the delinquents of the communal violence, compensation for the riot victims, action against the guilty officials responsible for the spread of the communal violence, stopping of requisition of Hindu residences by authorities, halting of economic boycott of minorities, exemplary punishments for crimes against women, protection and maintenance of Hindu temples, acceptance of a rational and scientific policy regarding education and adoption of a secular and democratic constitution for Pakistan that would protect the rights of the minorities as they desired to live in the land of their birth, their honor unsullied and with their rights asserted. West Bengal also witnessed a strong protest against the harassment of the Hindu minorities across the border and their uninterrupted huge flow into this small state. The Nehru-Liaquat Pact was condemned as the hour of national dishonor and surrender to the 'dark and dismal forces of aggressive, anti-Indian and anti-Hindu communalism.'<sup>28</sup> The Bengal Hindu Mahasabha publicized the evidences of attacks on Hindu properties, temples and crimes against women and accordingly started a strong public campaign to highlight the cleansing of the East Bengali Hindus. The Bengal Rehabilitation Organization also condemned the Pact and declared that it has not at all facilitated to create confidence or a sense of security in the minds of the Hindus and held the view that the clear rational aim of the Government of Pakistan 'is to establish a homogeneous state based on Islamic Law by squeezing out the Hindus from their hearths and homes.'<sup>29</sup>

The only consequence of the Pact was that according to an official report, nearly 32,000 of Muslims who fled West Bengal before 31<sup>st</sup> March 1951 came back and reclaimed the abandoned property left behind by them and had already been captured by the Hindu refugees from East Bengal. Out of this 32,000 Muslims 27,000 were from Nadia.<sup>30</sup> Prafulla Chandra Sen, the then Rehabilitation Minister of the Government expressed that 'It is a matter of great pride that most of the Muslim brothers who went away from West Bengal during the turmoil of 1950 have come back from East Pakistan.'<sup>31</sup>

And it was estimated that the Government of West Bengal restored 104,000 acres of land to the Muslims who came back.

Thus, this Pact helped the Government of Pakistan a lot to unburden its refugee problem. Though the Muslim migrants came back but there was hardly any out migration of the Hindu refugees; even those Hindus who had abandoned large properties in East Bengal and made an attempt to go back was foiled as the authorities of East Pakistan did not assist them to rescue their abandoned properties coupled with the threats of life and limbs by the new occupants. The result was that they failed to resettle in East Pakistan and came back to India. Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherjee vigorously opposed the Pact and threw away his Portfolio on that point. K. C. Neogi was also against the Pact and resigned from the Cabinet on that issue. Before concluding the Pact, Nehru paid a visit to Bongaon on 8 March 1950 to see personally the refugee camps and hear the tales of the sufferings of the refugees. Again on 15<sup>th</sup> March he visited Cooper's Camp and Habra Colony. But the sufferings of the refugees and the pitiful sight of the conditions of the camps could not move him from his stand.

Thus, the Nehru-Liaquat Pact failed to stop the influx of the refugees as it failed to provide a sense of security to the East Bengali Hindus and they continued to pour into West Bengal like huge waves of tide. It is to be noted that all the refugees who entered West Bengal did not seek shelter in the Government relief camps. Only a small section of the refugees found themselves in the Government camps and the following table<sup>32</sup> mentioned below proves that reality-

Rate of admission to Government camps		
Year	Months	Number of refugees
1950	October	8,754
	November	9,543
	December	6,549
	January	4,399

1951	February	4,215
	March	5,117

**(C) Old Migrants: The Third Phase (1951-1958)**

The influx of the refugees from East Pakistan to West Bengal went on continuously throughout the 1950s sometimes more and sometimes less in number. In 1951, 1.40 lakh people entered into West Bengal due to the unrest in Pakistan over the Kashmir issue. And according to the All India Census of 1951 there were 25.75 lakhs displaced persons from East Pakistan.<sup>33</sup> However, third phase of migration assumed an alarming shape with the introduction of the passport system on 15<sup>th</sup> October 1952 for travelling from Pakistan to India. For the initial five year since the Partition of India there were no restrictions on travels between India and Pakistan. But when Pakistan introduced the passport system the Hindus in East Bengal considered it as a method of plugging the escape route to liberty.<sup>34</sup> Thus, in 1952, 1, 27,000 refugees left East Bengal and entered India.<sup>35</sup> It is beyond doubt that a considerable number of them sought shelter in the Government relief camps and it was estimated that from January 1952 to June 1952 in average rate of 2,062 refugees were admitted into the Government relief camps. And the next six months witnessed an up and down in the rate of the refugees who were admitted into the Government camps and it is corroborated with the fact furnished below:

Rate of admission of the refugees into the Government Camps was as under:<sup>36</sup>

Year	Months	The rate of admission to the Government camps
1952	July	11,600
	August	7,800
1952	September	10,654
	October	31,753
	November	1,715

	December	755
--	----------	-----

And another 1.64 lakh in 1953-54 entered into West Bengal.<sup>37</sup> The current of exodus continued and accordingly in 1955, 2.12 lakh refugees sought refuge into West Bengal as in that year Pakistan declared Urdu to be its official language. The serious situation created by that steady influx was reviewed by the Eastern Zone Rehabilitation Ministers' Conference took place at Darjeeling in October 1955. In that conference the following remedies were suggested for arresting the pace of migration: easier transportation between East Pakistan and the neighboring Indian states; lessening of travel restrictions; advantages for remittance of money from East Pakistan to India; exchange of cultural missions together with sports team; proper facilities for trade, service and education for the minority community residing in East Pakistan; restorations of arms licenses de-requisition of the houses and properties of the minority community; and all matters pursued with the Pakistan Government.<sup>38</sup>

However, in 1956, 2.47 lakh refugees sought refuge into West Bengal as in that year Pakistan adopted an Islamic Constitution. But the Indian Government was not ready to be the continuous spectator of the unabated influx of the refugees from East Pakistan and thus, it made a last attempt to put a final end by stopping all assistance to the refugees after March 1958. As the Government declared that hence forth who would want to seek refuge into West Bengal they would have to take Migration Certificate to assure that after their arrival in West Bengal they would not demand rehabilitation from the Government. The table<sup>39</sup> furnished below gives an idea about the number of the refugees in West Bengal in and outside the Government Camps and Colonies in 1958:

Districts	No of Camps and homes	Population in camps and homes	No of Government colonies	Population in Government colonies	Refugees outside camps and colonies	Total refugee population
Burdwan	30	43,127	8	6,895	108,481	158,503
Birbhum	17	17,400	6	1,775	4,375	23,550

Bankura	7	11,165	2	50	4,796	16,011
Midnapur	11	16,838	38	4,390	22,654	43,882
Hooghly	11	18,013	38	21,580	65,017	104,610
Howrah	7	7,779	16	7,575	75,781	91,135
24 Parganas	45	43,248	209	105,345	714,161	862,790
Calcutta	7	5,059	–	–	571,555	576,614
Nadia	7	53,160	32	61,640	539,730	664,530
Murshidabad	8	12,709	21	9,945	53,443	76,097
Malda	–	–	12	2,939	53,443	76,097
West Dina jpur	1	989	11	3,865	158,095	162,949
Jalpaiguri	–	–	9	7,850	142,306	150,156
Darjeeling	–	–	2	3,375	26,668	30,043
Cooch Behar	1	1,159	12	6,550	222,118	227,827
Purulia	–	–	–	–	1,332	1,332
Total	152	240,682	389	243,765	2,778,506	3,262,952

In the same way, The All India Congress Committee reported that the number of displaced persons who migrated from Pakistan up to December 1958 was 88.57 lakhs. Of those displaced persons 41.17 lakhs came from East Pakistan.<sup>40</sup>

#### **(D). In-between Migrants (1958-63)**

The refugees who entered West Bengal between the years 1958 to 1963 were termed as in-between migrants. Though, in 1958, 4,898 and in 1959, 6,348 refugees left East Pakistan

however the fourth phase of the migration started after 1960-61. The year 1960 witnessed a gradual rise in the number of the refugees as in that year 9,712 refugees took shelter into West Bengal. From October 1960, the Government of Pakistan stopped permitting Pakistanis from visiting India ordinarily more than once a year which resulted in the hardship caused to the Hindus in East Pakistan, many of whom periodically visited their relatives in India.<sup>41</sup> And thus, in 1961, 10,847 refugees sought shelter into West Bengal. In 1962 communal riot broke out in East Pakistan and it took worst shape in Rajshahi and Pabna Districts that caused the influx of 13, 894 refugees into West Bengal in that year and in the following year 16, 295 refugees abandoned that part of land and settled on what they considered as their right side i.e. West Bengal.<sup>42</sup>

### **(E). the New Migrants (1964-1970)**

In 1964 communal riot broke out in East Pakistan as a repercussion of the Hazrat Bal incident in Kashmir. According to an account of Montreal, a Canadian correspondent of the Times Inc. 10,000 minorities were made homeless in and around Dacca alone. Countless Hindu houses were burnt down and on the walls of the earthen sheds left standing it was inscribed in Urdu, 'This is the House of a Muslim'.<sup>43</sup> As a result of it, 6, 93,142 refugees in 1964, 1, 07,906 refugees in 1965, 7,665 refugees in 1966, 24,527 refugees in 1967, 11,614 refugees in 1968, 9,763 refugees in 1969 left East Pakistan. And following the birth pangs of Bangladesh 2, 51,160 refugees crossed over to West Bengal.<sup>44</sup> As President Yahya Khan of Pakistan thought that '...every Bengali was an Indian agent. They must be butchered.'<sup>45</sup>

## **II. Response towards Rehabilitation**

### **Rehabilitation for Old Migrants: The First Phase (1947-50)**

While discussing about the refugee rehabilitation in the eastern part of India it must be borne in mind that rehabilitation works were mainly confined to the refugees living in the Government camps. At the same time, only those refugees could have the benefits of rehabilitation who sought shelter in the Government camps before the end of 1971. However, the in-between migrants were debarred from such benefits. In the same way, the post-1971 migrants were also declared as 'ineligible for settlement assistance in India'.<sup>46</sup> The Government, for giving relief and rehabilitation, divided the refugees into three categories –

(a) The refugees who entered into West Bengal between October 1946 and March 1958 were termed as the Old Migrants. The total number of them was amounted to about 41.17 lakhs. Of these refugees about 31.32 lakhs stayed on in West Bengal;

(b) The refugees who entered into West Bengal between April 1958 and December 1963 were termed as In-between Migrants and these refugees were not entitled to any rehabilitation assistance; and

(c) The refugees who entered into West Bengal between January 1964 and March 1971 were termed as New Migrants who were considered to be competent for rehabilitation if they opted for the same outside of West Bengal.<sup>47</sup>

On 13<sup>th</sup> March 1948, Nikunja Behari Maity, the then Minister and who was looking after the problem of the refugees, enunciated at a press conference the policy of the Government of West Bengal regarding the displaced Bengali Hindus. He expressed that though the Government did not want that the minorities in East Pakistan should abandon their hearths and homes however, the Government could not wait and allow the problem of the existing refugees to assume a critical shape. Rather, the Government would bring forward legislation for the purpose of acquisition of cultivable waste lands, estimated to be 60 lakh bighas by then, within West Bengal in order to distribute lands among the refugee farmers. It would be done so that they might prove it, they were productive citizens. And accordingly some rehabilitation programmes were undertaken by the Government of West Bengal albeit without any pre-planned scheme for the rehabilitation of those persons who entered into West Bengal till January 1950. And in spite of the initial vacillation the Central Government also besides giving relief, provided the refugees with rehabilitation who entered into West Bengal with that first wave of migration.<sup>48</sup>

### **Rehabilitation Work in North Bengal: Nature and Extent**

As a result of the Partition of India and accordingly of Bengal the eastern part of Dinajpur and south- western part of Jalpaiguri Districts of West Bengal fell into the share of East Pakistan. And due to this development the displaced Hindus of that part of land started pouring into the adjacent regions of Jalpaiguri fell into the share of West Bengal. The incoming displaced Hindus were of two types: the first section was comparatively rich and belonged to middle class and started transferring their families in the houses they rented. While the second section belonged to the lower middle class who did not have such

resources by which they could rent houses. Accordingly, they took shelter in the old and half ruined and abandoned houses found anywhere. The number of the people who belonged to the second category was more in number in the Jalpaiguri town. And in the Alipur town of Jalpaiguri District the first category of people was more in number.<sup>49</sup> As time rolled on, the number of the incoming refugees went high. Those who did not have financial resource, depended on the Government for relief and rehabilitation. Thus, simply opening of the relief camps and giving them financial support proved to be inadequate to the need. Accordingly, an Advisory Committee was set up to supervise the relief works. Sri Manindra Chandra Roy, a famous political activist of this region was appointed its Secretary. It was decided that it was improper to feed some able-bodied persons by giving them financial assistance for days together and allowing them to sit idle. It would lessen their sense of self-respect and let them to be reluctant to toil. A plan was formed that the olds and workable men and women who sought financial assistance from the Government would be given works and they would get wages in proportion to their works. In this region there were many tea gardens. And thus, there was inadequate supply of two things –baskets for keeping the tea leaves and hempen ropes. Thus, they were given the tasks to produce these two things.

But very soon this policy needed to be changed. Henceforth, emphasis was given on the issue of providing lands to the refugees for their resettlement. For these purposes refugees were divided into two categories- (a) agriculturists and (b) non-agriculturists. There were some of the Government vest lands at Pandapara within the Jalpaiguri town. This land was divided into small plots and distributed among the non-agriculturist refugee families. There were some fallow lands five kilometers away from the Jalpaiguri town. The owners of the lands were prepared to distribute the lands among the non-agriculturist families. As a result, some non- agriculturist refugee families were sent to this place and this refugee colony was named as Mohit Nagar Colony.<sup>50</sup> After that, arrangement was made for the agriculturist refugee families. At Fatapukur, 12 kilometers away from Jalpaiguri town, nearly 1,350 acres of land was found. The owners of these lands were willing to give the lands for the purpose of the rehabilitation of the refugees. It was fixed that a colony would be established there for the agriculturist refugee families. Here the land was not so fertile. Hence, it was fixed that each family would be given 15 *bighas* or 5 acres of land. It was also fixed that land for constructing houses would be at distant places from the land fixed for cultivation. Besides, 15 non- agriculturist families were fixed to be brought here for the

assistance of these agriculturist families. They consisted of teachers, blacksmith, carpenters and potters. They were fixed to be given 1 *bigha* of land per family. It was also decided that the whole land would be cultivated on a co-operative basis and this system was in practice for two years. Thus, the Fatapukur Colony came into existence in 1948 and it was the first refugee colony in West Bengal that was established under the supervision of the Government of West Bengal.<sup>51</sup>

### **Rehabilitation Work in South Bengal: Nature and Extent**

As noted earlier the refugees were mainly concentrated in Calcutta. Thus, for the refugees who took shelter in Calcutta, the Government adopted two sorts of measures. A group of refugees merely depended on the Government for habitation. They solved the problem of earning livelihood by themselves. These types of refugees were divided into two categories. First section was economically prosperous and had the capacity to pay rent for residence. They had the only problem to manage houses. To solve their problem the Government issued order and occupied some houses. And these houses were divided in the form of small flats and given them to various refugee families on rent. And the condition of the second category of refugees was comparatively not so well-to-do and thus, the Government had to manage abodes for them and bear the rent. However, they had to solve their feeding problem by themselves.<sup>52</sup> There were some other categories of refugees who took the responsibility of earning their own livelihood by themselves but could not manage abodes and the Government also could not help them in solving their residential problems. Hence, they took the initiative to solve this problem by capturing the military barracks which were then left abandoned. The military barracks of the Lake region and some Barracks of New Alipur area were captured by the refugee families for their abodes.<sup>53</sup>

A large number of the refugee families who were poor and lacked self-confidence took shelter in the Government camps at Habra and Baigachhi and other such refugee colonies close to Calcutta. It was considered unwise to let them continue their camp life for long. Simultaneously, as noted earlier, a large number of refugees found squatting the military barracks of New Alipur region and it acted as hindrance in the process of constructing road in that area. But so far the refugees were there it was impossible on the part of the Government to demolish the barracks though the authority appealed to the Government to make these barracks free of refugees. To solve these two types of problems - to manage

habitation for the refugees living in the refugee camps of Habra and Baigachhi, and to make arrangement for the alternative accommodation for the refugees who captured the abandoned military barracks at the New Alipur region and were living there; a plan for the establishment of a refugee colony at Habra was prepared under the guidance of Hironmay Bandyopadhyay, who was by then, the District Magistrate of the 24 Parganas.

At the end of 1949 the influx of the refugees almost thinned down. There was a refugee camp at Ranaghat that was meant for the refugees who entered West Bengal recently. It was named as Rupashree Palli. Here also the arrival of the refugees almost stopped. So, it appeared that the Government would be able to solve the refugee problem if it could rehabilitate those refugees who were still in the Government camps. On the other hand, the Central Government was also creating pressure on the Government of West Bengal to rehabilitate the camp refugees as it had already allotted Rs 60 lakhs to the later.<sup>54</sup> During the first phase of the migration (1947-50) the main policy of the Government were -

Firstly: to take the refugees to its relief camps and give them reliefs to enable to survive and for this purpose many camps were constructed throughout West Bengal. The Government also used the abandoned military barracks for providing temporary accommodation to the refugees.

Secondly: the Government also tried to acquire lands for the purpose of the establishment of refugee colonies. The Fatapukur Colony was the first of its kind. Many refugees were rehabilitated in those colonies. In spite of it, 70,000 refugees were staying in the refugee camps. Those who were considered as incompetent for the rehabilitation, numbered 7,500. Thus, the rehabilitation of remaining 62,500 refugees or 12,500 families (taking five refugees as family) appeared to be the main problem of the Government.<sup>55</sup> Though, the West Bengal Land Development and Planning Act had already been passed (Act XXI of 1948) that enabled the Government to acquire land. The remaining 12,500 refugee families belonged to four different classes.<sup>56</sup>

1. One class of the refugees belonged to lower-middle class. In East Bengal they earned from land and small trade. Most of these refugee families took shelter in Government camps adjacent to Calcutta such as Habra, Baigachi and Gayeshpur.

2. Another group of refugees was agriculturists. Some of them tilled their own land and some of them were share croppers. The number of these categories of refugees was almost equal to those of the lower middle class.
3. The third section of the refugees was weavers. They were trained artisans.
4. The fourth category of the refugees was fishermen.

Agriculturist refugee families mainly sought shelter in the Government relief camps in Burdwan. Besides, in Burdwan, there were some middle class refugee families living scattered in various refugee camps there. By then, Sri Basanta Kumar Bandyopadhyay was the administrator of Burdwan District and he was highly enthusiastic regarding the rehabilitation of the refugees. There was a large tract of fallow land in the eastern region of the district especially in the Kalna and Katwa Sub-divisions, the land adjacent to river Bhagirathi. He inspired the refugees to collect land at their own effort and take the responsibility of their own rehabilitation. It was fixed that the Government would give them loan for purchasing agricultural land and residential places, oxen, and would give cost of food for one year. In this way, the agriculturist refugee families got themselves settled there and this plan was highly successful.<sup>57</sup>

As noted above, the lower middle class refugees found shelter in the Government camps situated at Habra, Baigachi, and Gayeshpur. To solve the problem of the middle class and lower middle class refugees, the Government decided to acquire land to establish colony at Habra and Chandmari respectively. But the lands acquired in these two places appeared inadequate for the rehabilitation of the middle class refugees. So, lands were also acquired by issuing decree at Khosbas Mahalla and Hamidpur. These two places were adjacent to Chakda. At Habra two refugee colonies<sup>58</sup> were established namely Ashoknagar colony situated at the southern part and Kalyangarh situated at the northern part. All the middle class refugees of Habra and Baigachi Government Refugee Camps found abodes at Kalyangarh colony. Here the rehabilitation work was completed in December 1949 and accordingly Habra and Baigachhi Refugee Camps were shut down. Those who were considered ineligible for rehabilitation were kept there for sometimes and transferred to permanent liability camps later on. Then came the question of the refugee families of Gayespur. In Gayespur some refugees were fishermen but the majority of the refugees belonged to the middle class. Some of the middle class refugees were sent to Khosbas Mahalla. Here the refugees were given ten cottas of land per family. The remaining middle

class refugee families, numbered above 1,200 and the middle class refugee families of Burdwan were rehabilitated at Gayespur itself. There the refugees were given 4 cottas of land per refugee families. In spite of their initial unwillingness the remaining refugee families of Gayespur Camps raised their houses at the Gayespur Sub-city.

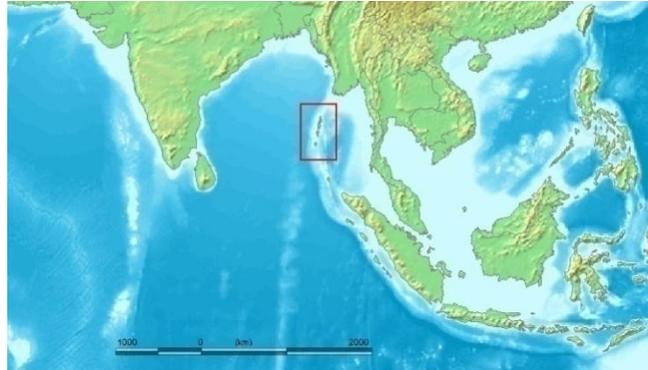
The third section of the refugees i.e. the weavers wanted rehabilitation in the places adjacent to Calcutta. But ultimately these categories of refugees were rehabilitated in the village of Chauhatta, almost adjacent to Rajpur. And the fourth category of the refugees i.e. the fishermen were rehabilitated at the place named Majherchar and accordingly this colony was named as Majherchar Colony. All the fishermen refugees who were living in the Government camps in 1949 were rehabilitated in this Colony.<sup>59</sup> And now in the Government refugee camps only those refugees were living who were considered ineligible for rehabilitation. This category of the refugees consisted of the old, physically handicapped persons, the widows and their minor children. Among the families whose guardians were women they were transferred to Titagarh Refugee Camp and the remaining families whose guardians were old or handicapped male persons they were sent to special camp situated near Ranaghat.

### **Rehabilitation Outside of West Bengal: Bengali Refugees in the Islands**

The Government of West Bengal held the view that the State did not have sufficient land to rehabilitate all the refugees sought refuge into it. Thus, the refugees had to be distributed in the other states within the Indian Union and as a corner stone of that policy Dr. Roy took the initiative to settle a few hundred of refugee families across the Black Water of the Bay of Bengal in the Andaman Islands.<sup>60</sup>

Geographically, the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, a Union Territory, are located between 6° and 14° north latitude and 92° and 94° east longitude and lie in the Bay of Bengal, 1,255 km away from Calcutta and got separated from Thailand and Burma by the Andaman Sea. There are two island groups in the territory namely the Andaman Islands and the Nicobar Islands. Andaman archipelago is the sum total of 204 islands and among these only three islands are big in size viz. North Andaman, South Andaman and Middle Andaman. There are low hills as well as plain lands. In the Andaman group of islands there are four Negrito tribes such as the Great Andamanese, Onge, Jarwa and Sentinelese, on the other hand, there are two Mongoloid tribes such as Nicobarese and Shompen in the Nicobar group of

islands. Port Blair is the administrative headquarter of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. From the cultural perspective they were, when the Bengali refugees were sent there, very much backdated and led a primitive life.



Location of Andaman and Nicobar Islands

The modern history of Andaman and Nicobar Islands commenced with the setting up of a settlement by the East India Company in 1789 which was abandoned in 1796. However, in 1858 the British Government of India established a penal settlement in these islands, primarily known as *Kalapani*,<sup>61</sup> for the transportation of the mutineers who took part in the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857. Henceforth, the political prisoners and dreaded criminals from the mainland India got started transporting there which continued till 1942 when the Japanese forces captured the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. However, following the surrender of the Japanese forces in the Second World War, the British reoccupied it and continued their administration on these Islands till the independence of India in 1947.

The Bengali refugees termed as ‘Old Migrants’ by the Government were mainly selected for rehabilitation in Andaman and Nicobar Islands. But there was considerable reluctance on the part of the Bengali refugees to go there for rehabilitation as this place was associated to the prisoners. The Cellular Jail that was situated in Port Blair regarded as the ‘Siberia’ of British India. And thus, the officials had to labor hard to persuade them to go there. To explore the possibilities of settling the refugees there the Secretary of Home Ministry of the Government of India toured the Andaman and Nicobar Islands in December 1948.<sup>62</sup> Following this, Dr. Roy sent there a team of 11 officials and non-officials guided by the Relief and Rehabilitation Minister. And accordingly, in December 1948, West Bengal Government placed its scheme for the colonization of the Bengalis in the Andaman before the Prime Minister of India.<sup>63</sup>

The Government of India accepted the proposal of Dr. Roy. Accordingly, in May 1949 nearly 200 refugee families were sent to Andaman for rehabilitation. It was the first batch of the Bengali refugees left for Andaman and this batch was received by the Commissioner Upen Ghosal himself.<sup>64</sup> The first batch of the refugees consisted of both the camp- refugees and non-camp-refugees and many of them belonged to the non-agriculturist middle-class family. But the land which was sanctioned for the refugees was full of jungle thus, needed a high level of labor to clear the land and make it suitable for cultivation. And thus, some of the refugee families especially those who belonged to non-agriculturist middle class family could not adapt themselves to the new environment of Andaman and returned to West Bengal. Almost 150 refugees came back from Andaman. But the agriculturist refugee families took the full advantage of the offer and made an attempt for permanent rehabilitation there.<sup>65</sup> Thus, when Government of West Bengal sought permission of the Central Government for sending more refugees to Andaman then the Central Government did not give satisfactory response. The Central Government argued that the return of the Bengali refugees proved that it was beyond the capacity of the Bengali refugees to get settled in such a distant place. In reply, the Government of West Bengal said that those who came back they were not accustomed to hard labor and the plan failed because of the improper selection of the refugees. Ultimately, the Central Government yielded to the argument of the Government of West Bengal but raised a condition that those refugees who would go to Andaman they would have to rehabilitate themselves at their own cost and the Central Government would not bear the expenses of their rehabilitation. Ultimately, in the face of the strong protest on the part of the Government of West Bengal against the inhuman decision of the Central Government, It had not only allowed the Bengali refugees for sending there but also agreed to bear the expenses for their rehabilitation. Accordingly, on 22<sup>nd</sup> February 1950, 72 refugee families and on 17<sup>th</sup> March 1951, 30 refugee families were sent to Andaman for rehabilitation. By July 1951, in all eight batches, 384 Bengali refugee families were rehabilitated in Andaman.<sup>66</sup> After that, the Government of India undertook a big plan for setting up colonies but it was decided that no new colonies would be established in the South Andaman; and the North Andaman would be reserved for forests. After cleaning the jungle new colonies would be established in the Middle Andaman only. And thus, when the arrangements for rehabilitation in the new island attained progress then it became possible to send more number of refugees there.

At the time of the departure of the refugee families for Andaman, besides providing required advices they were also given some instruments such as spade, sickle, hoe, crowbar, axe etc. for removing jungles and cultivation. They were also given some utensils such as bucket, dish, basket etc. They also got some instruments for amusements, for instance, a pair of cymbal (*kartal*) and tom- tom (*khol*) so that they could attain mental strength by uttering the name of God, as generally the Hindus do. They were also given some seeds of various vegetables such as brinjal, lady's finger, pumpkin, bottle-guard and other edible herbs; and also a set of new clothes.<sup>67</sup> Under the Five Year Colonization Scheme each refugee family was allotted ten acres of land –five acres for paddy cultivation and five acres for homestead and horticultural operation, situated at both on the slopes of hills and plain region. Each refugee family was also granted a recoverable loan of Rs. 1,730 for construction of hutments, buying of bullocks and agricultural essentials and *ex-gratia* grant of Rs. 1,080 for passage and maintenance till the first crop was harvested. In the colonization areas a number of schools and hospitals with outlying camps were established. And during the lean period, the refugees were provided employment in the Forest Department to increase their income.<sup>68</sup>

When Renuka Ray became the Rehabilitation Minister (1952-57) the Central Government was requested for sending more Bengali refugees there. But the Government of India in the Home Ministry, all of a sudden, came up with a technical reason for not sending more than the fixed quota. The Central Government pleaded that people from Kerala and other places in India had also to be accommodated in the quota fixed for the outsiders. To Dr. Roy it seemed to be most unreasonable and thus persuaded the Home Ministry, Dr. Kailash Nath Katju who was in charge there, for sending some more refugees from East Bengal. Accordingly, during the year 1965-66 about 1,200 persons from amongst New Migrants were moved to Betapur and Mayabunder in Middle Andaman. The able-bodied amongst them were engaged on road construction and jungle clearance. Up to the end of 1965-66 about 1,200 acres of land were reclaimed in Betapur in Middle Andaman. Besides, reclamation programmes were also undertaken in little Andaman and Neil Island. A sum of Rs. 70 lakhs had been proposed in the Budget Estimates for 1967-68 for the programme.<sup>69</sup> But because of the indifferent attitude of the Central Government this was gradually stopped.<sup>70</sup> However, from 1951 onwards over 10, 110 acres of forest land was cleared and 2,576 Bengali refugee families got themselves settled in the islands of

Betapur, Neil and Middle Andaman. They could also integrate themselves with the local inhabitants quite successfully.<sup>71</sup>

### **III. The Denial.**

Immediately after the partition when the uprooted persons were coming out from East Pakistan in ever increasing number for seeking refuge in the eastern part of India the Government of India defined the term 'displaced' in the following way:

'A displaced person is one who had entered India (who left or who was compelled to leave his home in East Pakistan on or after October 15, 1947) for disturbances or fear of such disturbances or on account of setting up of the two dominions of India and Pakistan.'<sup>72</sup> As a consequence, those Hindu refugees who were compelled to leave East Pakistan because of communal riots before that stipulated date got excluded from that official definition. However, in the subsequent periods, these displaced people were referred to as migrants and as it had already been noted that they were broadly divided into two categories i.e. the Old Migrants and the New Migrants.

The post-colonial Indian Government designated rehabilitation of the refugees as a national responsibility and Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru explained in a public speech that this was not merely humanitarian work on behalf of the state for the welfare of the displaced alone, but a pragmatic one on which the future and wellbeing of India depended.<sup>73</sup> However, the Central Government took much interest in the rehabilitation and resettlement of the displaced persons from West Pakistan. It not only established a Military Evacuation Organization in September 1947 to get Hindus and Sikhs out of Pakistan in a prompt way but also considered their rehabilitation was the first task to be solved. The Government also promptly decided that the property left by the Muslims who had taken shelter in Pakistan would be distributed as a cornerstone of its agenda for rehabilitating the refugees from West Pakistan.<sup>74</sup> Accordingly, they got the abandoned houses of the Muslim evacuees and many shops numbered about 3, 05,000.<sup>75</sup> According to the 89<sup>th</sup> report of the Estimate Committee 5, 68,000 refugee families from West Pakistan were rehabilitated in the abandoned land of the Muslims who left for West Pakistan, 4, 35,000 refugee families were given houses and shops as compensation in the urban region, 2, 02,000 refugees were appointed in various sections through the various employment agencies and 80,000 refugees got jobs in the various Department of the Central

Government.<sup>76</sup> Whenever the Government found any sorts of abandoned property of the Muslim evacuees in any form in the states like Bihar, Orissa, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Delhi, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Tamilnadu, Mysore, Andhra Pradesh and obviously in Punjab and Haryana, distributed among the refugees from West Pakistan without least vacillation.<sup>77</sup> A special organization was set up for the payment of compensation and the Interim Compensation Scheme provided cash payments to those in receipt of maintenance allowances, inmates of Homes and Infirmaries and those receiving gratuitous relief outside the Homes. A total payment of Rupees 42.5 lakhs had been made to over 1,300 such persons and over 18,000 priority claimants found shelter in the 27 new colonies built by the Government under that Scheme.<sup>78</sup> The Government set up 19 new sub-cities in Punjab and a sum total of Rs 306.37 crore or Rs. 3,232 per family was spent for the economic rehabilitation of the refugees from West Pakistan.<sup>79</sup> They also received a warm welcome on the part of the local Hindus and Sikhs who assisted them wholeheartedly. Both the Hindus and Sikhs went to Delhi and left no platform unused to get assurance of the Nehru Government for a complete, permanent and prestigious rehabilitation of the refugees from West Pakistan in and around the Indian part of Punjab. Thus, the Government of India on its own accord and sometimes under pressure left no stone unturned to provide the refugees with the required food, shelter, grants, lands, loans, jobs, higher education, technical education, health facility, banking facility and all other things. Keeping pace with the Government, the Relief and Rehabilitation Department also performed its duty more satisfactorily than that of West Bengal.

The geographical location of Punjab and contemporary defence management of India also went in favour of the Punjabi refugees. Delhi was very much close to Punjab and thus, any trouble by the West Pakistani refugees in the capital might destabilize the Government. On the contrary, the geographical distance from Delhi put the Bengali refugees in the east in a helpless condition. Furthermore, the Indian Army was largely manned by the Punjabis and thus, a military mutiny could take place if the kith and kin of the Punjabis were ignored. Consequently, the refugees from West Pakistan got all sorts of things they demanded and in reality; they got more what they had left in West Pakistan. In fact, Punjab witnessed a total exchange of population and possession.<sup>80</sup>

On the contrary, the Central Government spent Rs. 218.21 crore till March 1966 for the old migrants in West Bengal. Of this amount Rs. 96.73 crore was spent for giving relief to

8 lakh out of 32 lakh Old Migrants in 14 years. Remaining Rs. 121.48 crore was stated to be spent on the rehabilitation for the refugees of East Pakistan. However, Rs. 26.88 crore of that remaining amount was spent for the purpose of providing educational and medical facilities which were mainly in nature of grants for setting up schools, colleges and hospitals for the refugee and non-refugee population in the State. Thus, Rs. 94.60 crore was left for economic rehabilitation of 41.78 lakh refugees or 8.36 lakh refugee families in West Bengal and thus, the per family expenditure worked out to Rs.1,131.<sup>81</sup> In West Bengal there were no vacant evacuee properties also which could be allotted to the refugees from East Pakistan as the Pact of 1950 prohibited the utilization of 27 thousand acres of land for rehabilitation of the Bengali refugees in West Bengal. And as far as the township in the Eastern Zone was concerned the Government made a plan for building only five townships – Asoknagar, Taherpur, Gayespur, Hamidpur, and Khosbas Mahalla. But ultimately Ashokanagar-Habra township was constructed that also lacked the infrastructure for future industrial growth and thus, cannot be compared with the townships in the Western Zone.<sup>82</sup>

It was clear from one of the letter of Dr. Roy written to Nehru on 1<sup>st</sup> December 1949 that the fund that was granted for the Bengali refugees was insufficient and inadequate. Dr Roy wrote to Nehru:<sup>83</sup>

You are under the impression that your Government gave us large grant for the purpose of Relief and Rehabilitation. Do you realize that the total grant received for this purpose from your Government in two years -1948-1949, and 1949-1950, is a little over three crore and a rest about 5 crore was given in the form of loan. Do you realize that this sum is 'insufficient' compared to what has been spent for refugees from West Pakistan? I do not want to draw comparisons, because they are always liable to become invidious, but I do say that the grant so far given is insignificant for 26 lakh displaced people because it works out at about Rs 20 per capita spread over two years. Will you call it magnificent... 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. The provincial Government had to carry on as best as they could. And for these refugees a magnificent sum of Rs 20 per capita has been granted by the centre in two years.

In reply to Dr. Roy's letter Nehru wrote on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 1949:<sup>84</sup>

I do not know 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 certainly has not been because of any desire to differentiate but because of certain overwhelming factors. About half a million came from West Pakistan to India even before partition. We gave them no help at all. Then came a flood of about 5 to 6 million people in the course of roughly two months. There was something elemental about this and we had

to come out to face this situation. In Eastern Pakistan the migration has been at a lower pace and rather gradual. In West Pakistan practically all Hindus and Sikhs were driven out. In East Pakistan a very large number remained and it was your policy and ours not to do anything which might bring about a wholesale migration to West Bengal from Eastern Pakistan. This would have led to tremendous misery and to a problem which hardly any Government would have been able to face.

As Central Government tried its best to stop the influx of the refugees through various agreements and pacts and attempted to reduce its burden by defining the term 'displaced' that it felt convenient, the Government of West Bengal also applied various conditions while granting relief and acknowledging an East Bengali Hindu migrant as a refugee. Though, Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy who came to power in January 1948 had made efforts to help the East Bengali refugees not going against the Nehru Government yet the policy of the Government of West Bengal towards the refugees had been criticized for being 'tardy and half-hearted'. The first instance of the Government's attempt to limit its liability towards the refugees was the refusal of the Government to provide free relief to the able-bodied males.<sup>85</sup> On 22<sup>nd</sup> November 1948, the Government of West Bengal decreed that, 'no able bodied male immigrant ... capable of earning his own living (would) be given gratuitous relief either in cash or in kind for himself as well as member of his family for more than a week from the date of their arrival at ... camps.'<sup>86</sup> On 25<sup>th</sup> November 1948 the Government of West Bengal declared that such refugees were to be entitled to relief and rehabilitation who were ordinarily the residents of East Bengal and had managed to enter West Bengal between the precise dates of 1<sup>st</sup> June 1947 and 25<sup>th</sup> June 1948, 'on account of civil disturbances or fear of such disturbances or the partition of India...'<sup>87</sup> Though, an exception was made for the refugees who came from Noakhali and Tippera. For them it was declared that, 'the time of leaving such residence shall run from the 1<sup>st</sup> day of December 1946.'<sup>88</sup> This was followed by another order that fixed the 15<sup>th</sup> January 1949 as an ultimatum for the refugees to get themselves registered. It was announced that relief would be given to the able-bodied male immigrant and his family members just for one week, after that relief would be provided against works. But there were no such 'works' to appoint the able bodied in need of relief and there was no assurance on the part of the Government that it would be created for them. Rather, the official view was that the immigrant himself must find out the work, by dint of endeavor, suitable to himself.<sup>89</sup> At the initial stage the Government allowed discretion to camp offices to make exception in those cases where they would feel necessary to give free relief or doles to preserve life as the Government could understand that it would look bad if people died in its camps due to

starvation. But on 15<sup>th</sup> February 1949, Government decreed that ‘such able-bodied immigrants as do not accept offers of employment or rehabilitation facilities without justification should be denied gratuitous relief even if they may be found starving.’<sup>90</sup> Subsequently, in July 1949, the Government of West Bengal declared all the relief camps in West Bengal must be shut down by 31<sup>st</sup> October 1949, that was later extended to 31<sup>st</sup> December 1949,<sup>91</sup> ‘with a clear direction that rehabilitation of the inmates of the camps be completed by that date and the camps be closed with effect from that date.’<sup>92</sup> The Government of West Bengal, this time, made it clear that:

There may be cases where refugees may show disinclination to move... [t] that should not be any reason why the closing of camps ...should be delayed. As soon as lands have been allotted and tents offered and railway warrants issued, refugees are expected to move to their new places of settlement. If they do not, they unnecessarily hold up rehabilitation. It should be made clear to them that by doing so they cannot continue the life of the camp which shall positively be closed.<sup>93</sup>

In this way, Bengal’s first national Government asserted that it had discharged its responsibility completely to give relief to the refugees. Henceforth, the Government would rehabilitate only those persons whom it prefer to identify as refugees. Thus, it appeared to be the first task on the part of the Government to determine: who deserves to claim to be a refugee? The Government of West Bengal declared that ‘a refugee was a person who had migrated before the end of June 1948; to be classified as refugee, he was also required to have registered himself as such before January 1949...’<sup>94</sup> A refugee family had to get itself registered to be competent for relief. But in December 1948 the Government declared that the registration offices were fixed to be closed down by 15<sup>th</sup> January 1949. The Government tried to justify the edict by putting forward its argument that refugees who were genuinely interested to get themselves registered got sufficient time. But the Government’s choice of date, by which only those displaced persons were recognized as refugees who crossed the border before the end of June 1948, pushed the refugees into sheer difficulties who had crossed over to India between July and October 1948 after the Hyderabad crisis and afterwards.

#### IV. Squatters' (*Jabardakhal*) Colonies.

The displaced Bengali families who were not ready to take shelter in the Government Camps and depend on 'doles' and other form of Government assistance because of their high pride defied the Government law and started unauthorized occupation of land possessed by the Central and State Governments and by land speculators. This process of the unauthorized occupation of land led to the establishment of squatters' colonies<sup>95</sup> in Calcutta and its suburbs and elsewhere in West Bengal and the first of its kind was the Vijaygarh Colony which came into existence in the southern suburb of Calcutta in November 1947. The initial leadership for the foundation of this colony was given by Sambhu Guha Thakurata, Kalu Sen, Asish Debroy who brought 12 refugee families from the Sealdah Rail Station with them to establish this colony.<sup>96</sup> Later on Santosh Dutta, a veteran freedom fighter provided the leadership. Numerous refugee families rallied under him. They occupied the military barracks constructed at Jadavpur on the land acquired by the Government and by then left abandoned. Very soon, a colony of the refugees came into existence there that hummed with the activity of the settlers. But the Vijaygarh Colony cannot be termed as squatters' colony in the strict sense of the term as there was testimony that the Government gave an oral consent to the establishment of that colony.<sup>97</sup> Simultaneously, it was not legitimate either as it did not have any written document of authorization.<sup>98</sup>

From the late September 1949, when the Government gave order to shut down the camps some groups of refugees started occupying the vacant plots and garden houses forcibly especially in suburban Calcutta, Dumdum, Baranagar and Naihati. They used to occupy these plots and vacant houses secretly at night and promptly construct makeshift shelters under the cover of darkness. These led to the establishment of many squatters' colonies around Calcutta. Then the refugees formed the colony committees which used to supervise the laying and cleaning of drains and the provision of water supply. The first real squatters' colony came into existence at Sodepur, about 15 kilometers away from Calcutta under the leadership of *Nikhil Vanga Bastuhara Karma Parishad* (NVBKP) which was named as Deshbandhunagar. And the initial expenses of the NVBKP for the purpose of founding the colony amounted to Rs 22 and paisa 25.<sup>99</sup> But the second and the biggest squatters' colony was set up at Naihati under the name of Bijoyagar on the day of Lakshmi puja in 1949.

Squatter colonies were an attempt of self-rehabilitation on the part of the refugees. And in this regard Manohar Colony was typical. It was situated in an area of 50 acres at Dum Dum Road adjacent to Calcutta. The refugees of Manohar Colony organized the rebuilding of all facets of their lives on a co-operative basis and thereby exemplified an excellent enterprise. There was a central committee of the colony where every refugee family, after their arrival, had to get themselves registered by paying Rs 10 per household. Then they got plots to construct their huts and hut making was done as collective action. The day-to-day management of the colony was accomplished by its central committee, which coordinated its functions with committees of other squatters' colonies in the locality.<sup>100</sup>

Another colony, at Madhyagram, can be regarded as another typical example of refugee enterprise. It was situated twelve kilometers away from Calcutta where the committee conducted an upper primary school and formed co-operatives of weavers and carpenters. Here again the settlers assisted each other in building huts. They also made locally produced goods and services available at low price. The Madhyagram enterprise was so successful that a press correspondent had expressed its hope that it had the chances to be developed into a prosperous suburban town.<sup>101</sup> By the early 1950s squatters' colonies captured a large part of the landscape of the greater Calcutta and stretched out from Kalyani in the North to Sonarpur in the South. In 1960s the squatters' colonies got extended to the west bank of river Hooghly and gradually to Nadia, 24 Parganas, Malda, West Dinajpur and Jalpaiguri. As a consequence of this refugee enterprise, a previously rural hinterland got transformed into a huge urban sprawl in less than two decades integrally connected to the nucleus of the city.<sup>102</sup> In October 1950, the Government of West Bengal prepared a list of the squatters' colonies after conducting a thorough enquiry. It appeared that in greater Calcutta in all, 133 squatters' colonies came into existence. They in all occupied 2,000 acres of land and provided shelter to 21,377 refugee families. The colonies were of different sizes. Small colonies consisted of 40 families. The big colonies exceeded to 1,000 refugee families.<sup>103</sup> Some big colonies were:

1. Shahid Jatin Das Colony-(Belgharia)- 4,315 families.
2. Bijoyagar Colony-(Naihati)-4,123 families.
3. Netaji Nagar Colony -(Roypur, excluding Jadavpur region)- 4,423 families.
4. Bibeknagar Colony-2,757 families.

However, in the subsequent periods some more colonies came into existence as Chakrabarti noted that ‘there are at present... 149 pre-1951 and 807 post-1950 squatters’ colonies’ in West Bengal.<sup>104</sup>

### V. Rehabilitation: The Second Phase

There appeared an adverse reaction in West Bengal against the signing of the Nehru-Liaquat Pact and the decision of the Government that the refugees who entered into West Bengal after January 1950 they would be given only relief not rehabilitation. In the face of strong protest on behalf of the leaders of West Bengal the Central Government had to change its decision and declared that those refugees who had sought refuge or would seek refuge into West Bengal due to the riot of 1950 the Government of India would also take the responsibility of their rehabilitation.<sup>105</sup> It eventually, as noted before, established a Branch Secretariat of the Ministry of Rehabilitation in Calcutta to assist the Government of West Bengal.<sup>106</sup>

Ajit Prasad Jain, the Central Rehabilitation Minister, made request to the Government of West Bengal for making arrangement for the rehabilitation for the refugees who entered into West Bengal due to riots in East Pakistan in 1950 and living in the camps. Thus, the Government took decision that all the able bodied male refugees who were living under the supervision of the Government of West Bengal would be given rehabilitation by 30 April 1951. From March 1950 to December 1950, 2,52,000 refugees or 50,480 families (taking five persons as a family) found shelter in the Government Camps out of whom 30,000 or 6,000 (taking 5 persons as a family) families considered to be incompetent for rehabilitation. These 6,000 families were regarded to be the permanent liabilities of the Government. That meant that 44,480 refugee families needed rehabilitation.<sup>107</sup> During this time the task of giving rehabilitation became harder as the number of refugees was three and half time larger in comparison to the number of rehabilitable families in the camps in 1949. And a lion’s share of the surplus land had already been used for the earlier batches of refugees. In order to solve the problem a Deputy Commissioner was appointed to the Rehabilitation Department for the purpose of the acquisition of land. And the West Bengal Land Development and Planning Act (Act XXI of 1948) was passed in the Legislative Assembly that provided for quick acquisition of land at rates prevailing in 1946. However, this Act did not pave the way for the smooth acquisition of land because the landowners exerted pressure on the Government collectively not to apply the Act for the acquisition of

the same. Finally, the Government could apply the Act when the owners of the land left objecting to it.

The direction of the Central Government that the refugees would have to send to the rehabilitation sites by 30 April 1951 was executed. And the table<sup>108</sup> furnished below gives an idea about the total expenditure on displaced persons during 1947-52.

Total Expenditure on Displaced Persons during 1947-52.\*  
(Rs. in lakhs)

Nature of expenditure	On Displaced persons from West Pakistan	On Displaced persons from East Pakistan	Total
Grants			
Relief (including staff, evacuation etc.)	4233.32	1264.67	5497.99
Rehabilitation.....	732.97	405.48	1138.45
Total	4966.29	1670.15	6636.44
Loans			
Urban.....	1039.67	454.87	1494.54
Rural.....	856.20	459.90	1316.10
R.F.A.....	318.13	98.77	416.90
Total	2214.00	1013.54	3227.54
Housing			
Loans.....	2572.58	877.40	3449.98
Capital outlay on civil works.....	1088.33	...	1088.33
Purchase of shares.....	52.50	...	52.50

Total	3713.41	877.40	4590.81
Establishment			
Secretariat, Ministry of Rehabilitation...	69.69	3.13	72.82
Physical removal of persons contravening the provision of influx from Pakistan (Control) Act.....	0.22		0.22
Grand Total	10963.61	3564.22	14527.83

\*(1951-52 figures included here related to final grants).

But a large number of refugee families left the rehabilitation sites after a few months of their rehabilitation. Specially, those refugees who were sent under the Union Board scheme they left the rehabilitation sites in large number. Due to this development the Central Rehabilitation Ministry got disappointed to some extent and took decision to establish a Fact Finding Committee to find out the causes of the disaster. Accordingly, in November 1952 a Fact Finding Committee that included K. P. Mathrani, Joint Secretary to the Government of India, Ministry of Rehabilitation, N.K. Ray Chaudhury, Additional Secretary, Refugee Relief and Rehabilitation, Government of West Bengal and S. B. Sen, Indian Statistical Institute, Calcutta, was appointed 'to make a survey and assessment of the conditions in the relief camps and rehabilitation colonies, in particular of housing and gainful employment provided for and vocational and technical training given to the displaced persons in West Bengal and the result of various other rehabilitation measures undertaken by the Government.'<sup>109</sup>

The Committee submitted its report in June 1953 to a high power Committee of Ministries comprising of Finance Minister Chintaman Deshmukh, Rehabilitation Minister Ajit Prasad Jain, Government of India and the Chief Minister of West Bengal Dr. Bidhan Chandra

Roy.<sup>110</sup> The report considered the various aspects of relief and rehabilitation in West Bengal with care and furnished statistical data showing the actual work of the various schemes undertaken by the Government. Besides, it also provided an account of the conditions prevailing in the various refugee camps and colonies till 1952. The Government, as the Fact Finding Committee (FFC) found, adopted three fold schemes for the refugees- (a) Relief (b) Rehabilitation and (c) General measures.

**(a) Relief:** it meant enumerating and classifying the refugees on the basis of their social and economic background, keeping the refugees on doles and assistance for daily survival and more importantly making them prepared for rehabilitation. Thus, the refugees were taken to various camps<sup>111</sup> i.e. Relief Camps, Transit Camps, Permanent Liability Camps, Women Camps, Colony Camps and Work-Site Camps.

**(b) Rehabilitation:** the rehabilitation policies of the Government were basically of two types- rural and urban and these policies were chalked out on the basis of the occupational background of the refugees. Rural policies were further subdivided into two sections-

- (a) The refugees who were agriculturists and required both homestead land and large amount of cultivable land for sustaining them and their families; and
- (b) The refugees who were non-agriculturists and required both homestead land and loans of various types for settling themselves.

**Rehabilitation in Rural Areas:** The Government strived to implement four rehabilitation schemes for agriculturists in rural areas such as- (a) Type Scheme (b) Union Board Scheme (c) *Barujibi* Scheme and (d) Horticultural Scheme. And there were three schemes for non-agriculturists in rural areas such as- (a) Type Scheme (b) Union Board Scheme and (c) Variant of Union Board Scheme.

The findings of the Fact Finding Committee (FFC) about the working of these schemes expressed that under the ordinary Type Scheme displaced people were given land acquired by the Government or they bought land themselves and got loans according to prescribed scales. The displaced persons settled on the land, secured by private negotiations, had to purchase it on their own. However, they were entitled to receive rehabilitation assistance in the form of loans and grants subject to the ceiling of Rs 1,900 per family and the amount included Rs 555 for house building, Rs 600 for agricultural loans, maintenance loans for six months and wherever necessary irrigation and reclamation loans at Rs 100

and Rs 50 per acre respectively. Cash 'dole' for the tenure of one month was also included in the ceiling. The average holding of land in Government sponsored schemes was about 2 acres per family while in case of private settlements it was  $1\frac{2}{3}$  acres.

The Union Board Scheme was such a scheme where the Government sought to rehabilitate the displaced persons in small batches in different *mouzas* through the active assistance and cooperation of Union Board presidents and the teachers of the local schools who had been paid a small honorarium for that purpose. The success of the scheme depended on the assistance and cooperation of both the officials and the local people that the scheme lacked in. And under this scheme the refugees were also not given any loan for purchasing land and in many cases they were also not able to secure land in an adequate quantum to purchase with their own money for the purpose of cultivation.

Under the *Barujibi* or the betel leaf cultivation scheme, 2 *bighas* of land was given to the refugees for cultivation and 8 cottas for homestead land per household. The scheme failed because of the lack of irrigation facilities.

The Horticulture Scheme was same as *Barujibi* scheme and here only the land was meant for agriculture. Though the percentage of desertion under this scheme was not unusually high, the scheme as whole did not produce the desired results. Most of the families enlisted under this scheme were non-agriculturists. They were mainly drawn from the lower middle class and did not have any experience regarding vegetable cultivation. Furthermore, the scheme had some drawbacks such as –the sites for these colonies were not chosen with proper care and attention, in many cases the soil was not suitable, there was lack of irrigation facilities and the distance of agriculturists from marketing centers like Calcutta. All these reasons hindered the scheme to be as effective as expected to be.

Till the end of 1952 under the initiative of the West Bengal Refugee Rehabilitation Department, 2, 30,000 refugee families were sent to the rehabilitation sites. Among those refugee families 25,000 refugee families deserted the rehabilitation sites.<sup>112</sup>

The table<sup>113</sup> furnished below gives an account of the number of the families rehabilitated under the various schemes and the number and percentage of the families deserted the rehabilitation sites:

Scheme	Number of families	Total expenditure (Grants & loans) (Rupees)	Average expenditure per family (Rupees)	Number of families deserted	Percentage of desertion
1.TypeScheme					
(a)Government Sponsored	5,442	64,18,839	1,180	1,063	19.5
(b)Private Settlement	68,014	2,22,00,490	326	2,924	4.3
	73,456	2,86,19,329	390	3,987	5.4
2. Union Board Scheme	9,773	69,90,680	713	5,401	55.3
3.Barujibi Scheme	1,787	15,09,652	845	54	3
4. Horticulture Scheme	2,193	18,37,711	838	377	17
Total	87,209	3,89,57,372	447	9,819	11.2

If a thorough scrutiny is made in the table mentioned above it becomes evident that the percentage of desertion from the Government sponsored colonies was higher than that from the Private Settlement. The Union Board Scheme also yielded poor result as under that scheme 5,401 refugee families or 55.3 percent refugee families left the rehabilitation sites. Accordingly, in 1951 this scheme was abandoned. However, in Private Settlement and *Barujibi* Schemes there were relatively low rates of desertion of the refugees as in both the cases the beneficiaries were given the freedom to choose their own plot of land and the *Barujibis* were sent to such places where there was a tradition of growing betel

leaf plants. Furthermore, the relative inefficiency of the Type Scheme sponsored by the Government seems to be incompatible with the highest recorded per capita expenditure incurred by the Government under this scheme.<sup>114</sup>

There were three schemes for the rehabilitation of the rural non-agriculturists: (a) Type Scheme, (b) Union Board Scheme and (c) Variant of Union Board Scheme. Under the Type Scheme for rural non-agriculturists the Government provided the refugees with either developed homestead plots or loans for purchasing land by themselves. Under the scheme the ceiling of loans and grants was Rs 1,775 per family. This included Rs 500 as house building loan, Rs 500 as small trade loan, maintenance loan and cash dole for a period of one month. In addition to that, the persons who purchased land on private negotiations they were advanced Rs 75 per plot. The scale of assistance under the other two schemes was generally similar to that of the Type Scheme. The Variant of the Union Board Scheme was aimed at settling non-agriculturists on large tracts of waste land on payment of *salami* i.e. non refundable lump sum money. For avoiding the delays and difficulties with regards to the acquisition of land, refugee families were settled as tenants under private landlords with their active cooperation and that was its main difference with the Government Sponsored Colonies as in case of it the refugees were settled on the land acquired by the Government. The table<sup>115</sup> furnished below gives an account of the number of the non-agriculturist refugee families who were sent to the rehabilitation sites and the number of the refugee families left the rehabilitation sites.

Scheme	Number of families sent	Total expenditure (grants and loans) (Rupees)	Average expenditure per family (Rupees)	Number of families deserted	Percentage of desertion
1.Type Scheme					
(a)Government Sponsored	6,166	43,62,913	708	1,175	19.05

(b)Private Settlement	89,044	2,82,31,657	317	8,204	9.21
	95,210	3,25,94,570	342	9,379	9.85
2.Union Board Scheme	2,626	22,25,829	848	732	27.87
3.Variant Of Union Board Scheme	4,080	43,89,507	1,076	1,586	38.87
Total	101,916	3,92,09,906	385	11,697	11.47

One thing is also noticeable here that the percentage of desertion in the Government Sponsored Colonies was higher than that of the private settlement. And in case of the Union Board Scheme the percentage of desertion of the non-agriculturists was very high. However, the percentage of desertion was highest in case of the Variant of Union Board Scheme. It had two causes-

- a) There, colony was established in such a place that was situated far from the industrial region.
- b) Many of the refugees under this scheme were enthusiastic to go back to East Pakistan since before.

As a result, after their transfer to the rehabilitation site, they deserted the allotted homesteads within a few days without making an attempt for their rehabilitation as happened in case of the Ramchandrapur Colony.<sup>116</sup> Thus, the Fact Finding Committee collected some accounts regarding the housing loan that was advanced to the camp refugees for building houses. The figures gathered by the Fact Finding Committee expressed that with regard to the rural areas out of 1,89,125 families who were sent to the Government Sponsored Colonies and Private Settlements 1,14,463 families were given loans. The refugee families who had completed construction of houses after getting the loan their number was 76,271. And the refugee families who had started the construction

but yet to be completed the construction their number was 32,098. Hence, the refugee families who had already constructed their houses or had started construction numbered 1, 08,369. It meant 94.8 percent refugee families had utilized the loans advanced to them properly.<sup>117</sup>

**Rehabilitation in Urban Areas:** in urban areas a considerable number of the refugee families got themselves settled on their own and they were given various types of rehabilitation assistance such as house building loans, trade loans or professional loans. Several urban Governments sponsored colonies were established where the non-agriculturist refugees who were living in the camps were sent. Many of these refugee families formed adjuncts to the existing large towns but there were some colonies which were located in the rural areas but because of the large concentration of the non-agriculturist refugee families there they were to be reclassified as towns, for instance, Taherpur and Gayespur were two such colonies which have a population of 15,000 and 10,000 respectively. According to an official estimate up to September 1952, about 17,500 refugee families were given trade and business loans and the total amount so disbursed was Rs 91.34 lakh. In addition to that, an amount of Rs 8.36 lakh was disbursed to the 1,047 lawyers, medical practitioners and kavirajas as professional loans which were intended for books, equipments etc. There was also a provision for maintenance at Rs 100 per month for a period of six month to enable them to tide over the initial difficulties in order to rehabilitate themselves.<sup>118</sup>

The Fact Finding Committee expressed that about 3,186 thousand refugee families in urban areas in Government sponsored colonies and private settlements received house-building loans. The refugee families numbered 21,000 who settled in the Government Sponsored Colonies most of them got house-building loans and accordingly constructed various types of houses. Besides, plans were also made for the construction of 2,000 houses in Habra Township and 221 aluminium hutments in various colonies adjacent to Calcutta. Direct construction was also undertaken by the Government on a limited scale. The FFC estimated that provision had already been undertaken for the housing of about 1.5 lakhs till September 1952. The Committee also found that 45,000 applications eligible for house-building were pending with the Refugee Relief & Rehabilitation Department.<sup>119</sup> Beside the Schemes for the resettlement of the refugees in rural and urban areas mentioned above, steps had also been taken for parting education and training to refugee children and

adults. Decision was taken that every school going refugee child should get free primary schooling and the more deserving among them should receive free secondary education. Sanctions were also made for stipends for bright and promising students for collegiate and technical education. At the same time special facilities were given for technical and vocational training for refugee students with aptitude for training of this kind.

(c) **General Measures:** Besides giving relief and rehabilitation the Government also took initiatives about the education and health of the refugees. These were known as 'general measures' as they cut across the known borderline between relief and rehabilitation. The Government adopted three fold schemes relating to education- (a) setting up of new schools, colleges and technical institutes and the enhancement of students' intake in the previously presented ones (b) provisions of stipends to the refugee students on the basis of merit cum means and (c) provisions of vocational and job based training to the refugee students by way of reserving seats for them.<sup>120</sup> The nature of Government's response towards health of the refugees will be discussed in the third phase of rehabilitation.

**Primary education:** Special additional financial assistance was sanctioned by the Central Government to the State Government for imparting primary education to the refugee school going children whose number was estimated to be nearly 1.5 lakhs. And for these children 1,019 schools were opened and during the year 1952-53 about 1.31 lakh children attended these schools.<sup>121</sup>

**Secondary Education:** In respect of the secondary education, needy students reading in classes V to X were granted stipends for purchasing books and paying school fees. At the same time, the Ministry of Rehabilitation had also sanctioned the opening of new secondary schools numbered 9 in different colonies and the expansion of accommodation in some of the existing secondary schools so that more displaced students could be admitted in those schools. Till the year 1951-52, 238 middle and high schools were helped with grants of Rs 25.17 lakhs and loans of Rs 3.35.<sup>122</sup>

**Collegiate Education:** The Government of India had sanctioned loans and grants for the expansion of the existing colleges and opening of new colleges for accommodating refugee students. A notable instance of this was a loan of Rs 80 lakhs sanctioned for the scheme of dispersal of college students from Calcutta and thus 12 new intermediate colleges were opened and 20 existing colleges and 9 existing technical institutions

received financial assistance. It was originally intended that at least 75% of the students in these institutions should be from the displaced families but in actual practice only 55% of the total students belonged to the displaced families. The refugee students who were promising and whose parents or guardians were not in a position to bear the expenses of such education were given stipends for pursuing education in arts, science or medical, engineering and professional institutions. The table,<sup>123</sup> furnished below shows the details of expenditure incurred on different types of education up to December 1952 :

Level	Assistance to students ( in thousand Rs.)		Assistance to institutions (in thousand Rs.)		Total
	Grants	Loans	Grants	Loans	
Primary	420	---	7,543	---	7,963
secondary	4,575	---	2,674	334	7,583
College	1,930	11,52	1,89	8,542	10,672,52
Technical	415	---	---	---	415
Total	7,340	11,52	10,406	8,876	26,633,52

**Technical and Vocational training:** The Directorate General of Resettlement and Employment (DGRE) of the Government of West Bengal established 8 training centers in West Bengal for giving technical training to 1,044 and vocational training to 406 refugee students respectively. Training cum work centers were also established at Titagarh, Habra

and Gayespur where about 1,100 refugee students got training or secured employment. Arrangements were also made for imparting technical training of superior type to 328 and 216 refugee students per year in the College of Engineering and Technology, Jadavpur, and the College of Aeronautical Engineering, Dum Dum, respectively. In addition to that there was also a provision for apprenticeship training, both through the agency of the Directorate General and through the Government. A summary of the important data about the schemes for technical and vocational training is furnished in the table<sup>124</sup> given below:

Schemes	No. of persons trained	Number of persons placed	Expenditure incurred Rs.
DGR&E Training Scheme	2,446	547	14,66,784
State Govt. Training scheme	359	180	2,05,149
Apprenticeship Schemes			
(a)DGR&E	750	550	1,10,861
(b)State Govt.	90	75	19,442
Total	3,645	1,352	18,02,236

The Fact Finding Committee submitted its report in June 1953 that was a review of the rehabilitation works in West Bengal till 1952. The report, which announced that keeping the refugees on dole or assistance or relief could not be a long term solution to the problem rather there was the necessity of rehabilitating them on a permanent and viable basis, may be regarded as the nucleus of all the subsequent programs undertaken by the Government for the resettlement of the Bengali refugees in West Bengal.

The rehabilitation schemes undertaken by the Government failed dismally as a considerable number of refugees deserted the rehabilitation sites. The rehabilitation efforts made so far were not more than a tale, 'of unplanned and infructuous expenditure.'<sup>125</sup> The Government only sanctioned money for the rehabilitation work but it did not make any enquiry into it whether the money was properly utilized for that purpose or not. The Secretary to the Ministry of Rehabilitation had no idea about how far the rehabilitation scheme had fructified, the Deputy Commissioner, Rehabilitation Department, also did not know whether the loans sanctioned by the Centre for East Pakistani refugees had been disbursed and even the Government of West Bengal did not have idea about the extent of the success or failure of the rehabilitation schemes undertaken by it.<sup>126</sup>

After the submission of the Report of the Fact Finding Committee in June 1953 there was a meeting of the Committee of the Ministers in Delhi from 2<sup>nd</sup> October 1953 to 3<sup>rd</sup> October 1953 and accordingly the Committee of Ministers based its Report on the findings of the Fact Finding Committee and submitted its recommendations in 1954. The Government of India accepted its recommendations in toto.<sup>127</sup> The Committee of Ministers expressed its opinion against keeping the refugees in the relief and the transit camps for longer duration in such a way:

We consider it harmful to allow persons to continue in relief and transit camps for such a long period with consequent demoralization and the creation of the vested interests. It has also to be borne in mind that the longer these persons stay in the camps, the greater their resistance to dispersal.<sup>128</sup> The report of the Committee of the Ministers further expressed that:

With a view to avoid forced idleness which is demoralizing, it has been laid down as a matter of policy that the inmates should be dispersed to colony camps or the sites of rehabilitation centers or to worksite camps which may be either in the nature of irrigation and other works undertaken by the West Bengal Government or test works specially started for the purpose.<sup>129</sup>

The Committee of Ministers emphasized on the defects and lacuna in the rehabilitation schemes and the most important among those were as under:<sup>130</sup>

1. Sites for colonies-agricultural as well as non-agricultural-were not selected with due regard to their relevance to the rehabilitation planning. Wrong selection of sites was largely due to the hasty dispersal of the camp families in 1951-52.

2. Non-agricultural colonies were established in rural areas, and agriculturists accommodated in non agricultural colonies.
3. There were no systematic follow-up measures.

The following remedial measures<sup>131</sup> were suggested by the Committee of Ministers :

1. A definite dispersal programme should be laid down for liquidation of relief camps as expeditiously as possible and in any case before March, 1955.
2. Incoming migrants should be sent straightway to the work site and colony camps from transit camps.
3. The living conditions in the existing camps should be improved by providing separate partitioned accommodation for the inmates.
4. There should be more careful planning of schemes, proper selection of sites and personnel, and continuous watch on the progress and implementation of the schemes.

It may be noted here that in July 1952 the United Central Refugee Council, the most viable refugee organization in West Bengal, established in 1950, submitted a memorandum consisting of rehabilitation plan of the Bengali refugees to the Government. The memorandum was the outcome of the extensive survey conducted by a committee appointed by the United Central Refugee Council. The memorandum noted that the progress of rehabilitation should be assessed not on the basis of money spent on it but the extent of economic rehabilitation of the refugees. The policy of the Government, as the memorandum noted, to regard the permanent shelter as the first step towards rehabilitation and consider the gainful occupation as secondary was wrong. Besides, it noted that there was no integrated plan for the economic rehabilitation of the refugees and the schemes were devised piecemeal and were not related to the economy of West Bengal. And accordingly the memorandum for the rehabilitation of the refugees gave some comprehensive plan<sup>132</sup> such as—

- 1) determination of the amount of work left undone by the previous schemes;
- 2) ascertainment of the exact number of refugees in the state;
- 3) a clear idea about the amount of land available for the settlement of the refugees.

## **VI. Rehabilitation: The Third Phase**

During the third phase of rehabilitation also the Government seemingly adopted three fold schemes for the refugees- (a) Relief (b) Rehabilitation and (c) General measures.

**(a). Relief:** During this time also the relief camps were being maintained for the displaced persons from East Pakistan and there were, excluding the permanent liabilities, 77,300 camp population till 1954. In addition to that, relief was being provided to 40,000 unattached women and children, old and infirm displaced persons.<sup>133</sup> In the following year there were 78 relief, transit, worksite and colony camps in West Bengal with 1,06,211 inmates. Of these, 55 had been work-site camps with 56, 269 inmates. During the financial year of 1955 to 1956, a provision of Rs. 17.1 crores had been made for relief and rehabilitation of the displaced persons from East Pakistan and by 31 March, 1956 there were 2,69,266 displaced persons in the various camps and it rose to about 2.97 lakhs in 1957.<sup>134</sup> The refugees in camps received relief benefits, like doles, free medical treatment, free milk-supply, and primary education for their children.<sup>135</sup> During 1957-58 measures were taken to regulate migration in West Bengal and steps were taken to rationalize relief policy and shift the emphasis from relief to rehabilitation. During the past year over 60,000 refugees were dispersed from the camps. At a High level conference took place in Calcutta in July, 1958, decision was taken that all camps in West Bengal should be closed by the end of July 1959. Out of about 45,000 displaced families in these camps about 10,000 would be rehabilitated in West Bengal and remaining 35,000 in the Dandakaranya and other states of India.<sup>136</sup> And those refugee families who would not leave for Dandakaranya they would have to leave the camps after taking 6 months of cash doles in advance.<sup>137</sup> During 1958, 28 camps were closed down and there were 124 camps still on pace in West Bengal.<sup>138</sup> However, the Government failed to make that decision as final as it was again compelled to reopen the camps and reactivate its rehabilitation machinery with newer responsibilities when in 1964 a fresh communal violence rocked many parts of the subcontinent and another round of influx of the refugees from East Pakistan hit the shore of West Bengal.

**(b) Rehabilitation:** The third phase of rehabilitation began from 1952 onwards. By this time 2.3 lakhs of displaced persons from East Pakistan settled on land in rural colonies and in professions ancillary to agriculture. The amount of loans advanced till 1952-53 had been 7.74 crore. And another provision for Rupees 2.54 crore had been made and thereby about 25 lakhs families were likely to be settled in 1953-54.<sup>139</sup> By 1953-54 the number of displaced families of agriculturist and non-agriculturists from East Pakistan settled was 2.92 lakhs. By the end of 1953-54 the Central Government advanced Rs. 9.62 crores for granting rural loans to the displaced persons from East Pakistan while the provision for

1954-55 was fixed to be 3.90 crores. And regarding the construction of the houses, the general policy of the Government was to provide building sites and or loans and to leave the construction to the displaced persons themselves. By 1953-54 the displaced persons constructed 2.45 lakhs houses and tenements out of the loans granted to them by the Government. Besides, the Government had also undertaken building work on its own and about 13,450 houses and tenements had been constructed for the displaced persons from East Pakistan. Thus, till August 1954, Government spent Rs. 55.30 crores on displaced persons from East Pakistan with regards to grants, loans, housing, and establishments.<sup>140</sup>

Sri Mehr Chand Khanna took over as Minister of Rehabilitation in the month of December, 1954. By 1954, four of the five rehabilitation schemes were left and only the Type Scheme was retained that meant that the Government did not take up in earnest the most vital part of rehabilitation programme i.e. gainful occupation.<sup>141</sup> It was only sometime in 1955 and thereafter that the Central Government thought to deal with the problem of the displaced people from East Pakistan on a rational basis that meant rehabilitation in any form should be on economic considerations.<sup>142</sup> Accordingly, the recommendations made by the Committee of Ministers in 1954 were publicly announced as the 'text of the future rehabilitation policy of the Government.'<sup>143</sup>

During this time many new experiments were undertaken regarding the camp refugees. For instance, earlier the system was that refugees were sent to the rehabilitation site after making the site appropriate for that and it was definitely a time consuming process. Thus, the new system was that as soon as the new rehabilitation site could be acquired the refugee families having able bodied males would be sent and engaged for the development of that rehabilitation site. They would get wages as per their work and the families having more members would get additional 'dole'. These colonies were known as camp-colonies that meant neither camp nor colony rather in between them.<sup>144</sup>

The work-site camp may be assumed as the extended form of the camp colonies. As the Government could not acquire more land for the rehabilitation of the camp refugees thus it was beyond the capacity of the Rehabilitation Department to engage the refugees in various works for long. Thus, arrangements were made to engage them in the various development works undertaken by the Government under its various Departments. Initially, the policy was to provide work to the able- bodied refugees and accordingly they were kept engaged in the Government Projects as well as Central Government Projects i.e.

Morland Projects and Damodar Valley **Corporation (DVC)**.<sup>145</sup> Subsequently, it was however, decided that the refugees would be engaged in the excavation of the irrigation canal to drain out water from the adjacent area of Calcutta to make the area suitable for the cultivation. And in exchange of it, it was decided that a particular portion of the reclaimed land would be used for the rehabilitation of the refugees of the Bagiola Worksite Camps.<sup>146</sup> An idea can be had from the table furnished below about the number of the camp refugees engaged in the earth-cutting work in the different districts of West Bengal in January, 1955.<sup>147</sup>

Name of the Districts	Number of the refugees engaged in the work
24 Parganas	21,483
Burdwan	23,549
Midnapore	1,785
Birbhum	4,333
Howrah	1,252
Hooghly	2,552
Total	54,954

And in 1956 a survey was conducted that provides us an idea regarding how the work-site camps were operating:<sup>148</sup>

Nature of Work	Mileage	Man-days	Earthwork (cft)	Wage earned
Road Construction	84	52,22,569	3,01,93,641	5,92,083
Canal Construction	16	90,46,811	2,52,69,398	4,99,708
Embankment Work	03	39,021	27,41,895	55,434
Development Work	--	1,78,775	85,61,184	2,23,767
Total		1,44,87,176	6,67,66,118	13,70,992

By 1955, four new townships had been established at Fulia, Habra, Gayespur and Hamidpur-Khoshbashmohalla in West Bengal.<sup>149</sup> Till August, 1956 about 3.58 lakhs families had been settled in rural areas on lands and in other necessary avocations, involving an expenditure of over Rs. 16 crores. More than 88,000 families in urban areas received loans totaling Rs. 9.87 crores for their rehabilitation.<sup>150</sup> By August 1956 about three lakhs houses had been built in the eastern zone by the displaced persons with the financial assistance from the Government. And Government also constructed nearly 15,000 houses and 1,100 tenements.<sup>151</sup> Till August 1957 about 4.33 lakh families got resettlement in rural areas on agriculture and other ancillary occupations and loans given to such families amounted to about Rs. 21.25 crores.<sup>152</sup> And a sum of Rs. 11.24 crore had been advanced as loan for rehabilitating 101,000 displaced families in urban areas.<sup>153</sup> During 1958, loans to the extent of Rs. 329.96 lakhs were given to 17,800 displaced families in urban and rural areas.<sup>154</sup> During 1959-60, schemes for rehabilitation of 1,605 families were sanctioned in West Bengal and by way of rehabilitation loans, schemes costing Rs. 79.68 lakhs were sanctioned to cover 3,512 displaced families living in the camps of West Bengal, Orissa and Bihar. In West Bengal, a sum of Rs. 18.88 lakhs was sanctioned for acquisition of land and up to December 1959 the total amount sanctioned for acquisition of 53,400 acres of land was about Rs. 463 lakhs. The year 1959 brought the first sensation of 'fulfillment' regarding the rehabilitation millions of displaced persons who sought refuge into India from the two wings of Pakistan. And in respect of the refugees from East Pakistan that year marked the final phase thus schemes were formulated for solving the residuary problem of rehabilitating the displaced persons living outside camps. Accordingly, the Government of West Bengal made assessment of the residuary problem in regard to certain categories of displaced persons.<sup>155</sup> In 1960 M.C. Khanna declared that the main work of rehabilitation has been over and only some residuary works remained to be completed. The residuary problem in West Bengal was assessed at about Rs. 22 crores- Rs. 15 crores under loan and Rs. 7 crore under grants.<sup>156</sup> Thus, the Government had decided to wind up the Rehabilitation Finance Administration, set up in 1948 under an Act of Parliament for providing loans to displaced persons from East and West Pakistan to enable them to settle in business or industry, in June 1960.<sup>157</sup> And it was recorded that till December 1960, about 6.40 lakhs families received rehabilitation assistance in one form or another and the amount sanctioned by the

Government for relief and rehabilitation of the displaced persons from East Pakistan amounted to about Rs. 190 crores.<sup>158</sup>

On December 31, 1960, there were 72 camps in West Bengal and there were about 20,000 displaced families or 89,483 persons in those camps. Out of those 20,000 families, 17,000 were agriculturists whose rehabilitation was mainly linked with Dandakaranya Scheme and 1,155 families would be rehabilitated in U. P. during 1961-62 at a cost of Rs. 34.06 lakhs.<sup>159</sup> During 1961, the camp population in West Bengal got reduced by 77,177 persons and 67 camps were closed down. And thus, on the 1<sup>st</sup> January, 1962, there were 3,109 families comprising 12,306 displaced persons in 5 camps in West Bengal. Of these 3,109 families, about 1,080 were non-agriculturists and were dispersed to rehabilitation sites within West Bengal by the end of February 1962 and the remaining 2,029 long term liability category families were transferred to Homes.<sup>160</sup>

**Rehabilitation Schemes for the Refugee Colonies:** There were three categories of colonies-(a) Government Sponsored Colonies-Urban and Rural (agricultural and non-agricultural); (b) Squatters' Colonies and (b) Private Colonies. By 1956, the State Government set up 312 urban and rural colonies.<sup>161</sup> The refugee colonies came into existence hastily thus, lacked the basic amenities of civilized life. The State Government constituted a Development Committee in 1956 that prescribed the standard of the development of the colonies.<sup>162</sup> The Central Government generally accepted the recommendations of the Committee and accordingly development work on the pattern laid down by the Committee was taken up in 1957. However, the State Government selected only some of the Government sponsored colonies and squatters' colonies for the development. It was decided that the Central Government would provide the fund in the form of loans for the development of those colonies. And the loans would be recovered from the refugees by charging it to the cost of land. However, the funding process was inordinately delayed because of a debate took place between the Central and the State Governments regarding issue of estimate which was prepared by the Government of West Bengal for the purpose of the development of the colonies. And the first point of the debate between them was the number of the colonies that would be taken up for the development. The second point of the debate was that Central Government was determined to decrease the estimate of the State Government by 40 percent. But it took time to make the fund available to the state Government and when it became available the

fund was hopelessly inadequate because with the passing of time prices escalated and there was no provision for the escalation in prices. The Government assessed that it needed Rs. 681.67 lakhs for the development of the 343 colonies. However, the Central Government made objections against it and as a result this was later revised to Rs. 616.67 lakhs for 278 colonies. Besides, a suggestion of a separate provision of Rs. 200 lakhs was made towards the share of the Central Government for the betterment of the squatters' colonies numbered 58 as a part of the development of the Tollygunge area by the Calcutta Metropolitan Development Authority. At last only Rs. 479 lakhs was allocated by the Central Government. But in the meantime prices had escalated and it made the Central allocations more insufficient still. Thus, the State Government began development work in 102 Government Sponsored Colonies and 9 pre- 1951 squatters' colonies under Phase-1.<sup>163</sup> And regarding the regularization of the squatters' colonies, till August 1957 the Government found 131 squatters' colonies to be eligible for regularization. Out of those colonies 39 colonies were regularized in full and 9 in part and thereby the total number of families benefitted was 4, 416.<sup>164</sup>

During 1962-63, a sum of Rs. 13.10 lakhs was sanctioned for the development of the Government colonies. And up to the end of December, 1962, schemes in respect of 192 colonies which involved a total expenditure of Rs.418 lakhs was sanctioned. Besides, up to the end of December 1962, a total amount of Rs. 53.69 lakhs was sanctioned to the municipalities in West Bengal for providing municipal services in the areas occupied by the displaced persons. And 752 tenements in Behala and 784 tenements at Bon Hooghly, near Calcutta, had been completed. Works on building roads and internal drains had been fulfilled by the end of June, 1963.<sup>165</sup> And during 1965-66, provision was made for the development of 151 urban, 76 rural and 109 squatters' colonies and thus sanctions amounting to Rs.86.71 lakhs had been issued for that purpose.<sup>166</sup>

In 1975 a Working Group was established by the Central Government with a view to a detailed assessment of the residual problem of rehabilitation. The report of the Working Group was published in 1976. The main recommendation of the Working Group was that the refugees, at this stage, should be provided with the basic necessities of the civic amenities without making any difference between the pre-1951 and post-1950 squatters' colonies. It also made recommendations to take up development works both in urban and

rural colonies. And the expenditure<sup>167</sup> in accordance with the price schedule of 1975-76 would be as under:

a. Colonies within Calcutta Metropolitan Development Authority are:

Urban Rs. 4,560 per plot

Rural Rs. 3,600 per plot

b. Colonies outside Calcutta Metropolitan Development Authority are:

Urban Rs. 2,700 per plot

Rural Rs. 1,400 per plot

The total cost of development was estimated as Rs. 52.43 crores that would cover 1,70,269 refugee plots.<sup>168</sup> Following categories of colonies, furnished in the table<sup>169</sup> below, were selected for the development by the Working Group:

Sl. No.	Categories of colonies	Number of colonies	Number of plots
1.	Govt. sponsored colonies	394	69,804
2.	Pre-1951 Squatters' colonies	140	27,082
3.	Post-1950 Squatters' colonies	175	15,623
4.	Private colonies having 50 or more families	299	57,760
	Total	1,008	1,70,269

However, out of the expenditure i.e. Rs. 52.34 crores recommended by the Working Group during the Fifth and Sixth Plan periods only Rs. 2.68 crores was granted by the Centre for the Fifth Plan Period. The Central Government made no provision for the Sixth Plan Period. The Government reduced the recommended expenditure but that reduced amount also did not make available. As a result, out of the 1.70 lakh families who were

expected to bring under the Working Group's programme of development only 12,000 families were taken within the development programme that was again proved to be of poor quality.

In order to make an appraisal of the extent of the development of the colonies the Refugee Rehabilitation Committee appointed a sub-committee. The State Government completed the development work of the 63 Government sponsored Colonies covering 10,552 plots and 40 squatters' colonies covering 5,346 plots in 1977. And during the period 1978-1984 a total number of 208 colonies were developed under Phase-II development programme.<sup>170</sup>

And in respect of giving the title deeds or the *Arpanpatra* to the refugees living in the Government sponsored or the squatters' colonies there was a long history to go through. Though the Government of India approved the conferment of right and title on displaced persons over homestead and agricultural lands allotted to them as a rehabilitation measures in Govt. sponsored and squatters colonies in West Bengal yet it attached various terms and conditions to it. It was decided that land would be transferred free of cost but land in Government sponsored colonies (518) would be transferred only to those displaced persons who were allotted lands under the orders of the Government in force from time to time. The land in rural colonies would be transferred on a freehold basis subject to the condition that the displaced persons concerned would not be entitled to sell the plots at least for 10 years without the prior permission of the Government. The plots in urban areas would be transferred on the leasehold basis for 99 years and the plots would be inalienable without the prior permission of the Government. And the lessee would be required to pay ground rent @ Re. 1/- per 100 sq. yards or a fraction thereof per annum.<sup>171</sup> And with regards to the approved squatters colonies (149) the competent allottees would be those who were in occupation of the land as on 31.12.1950. And those who came in possession of the different plots of land in approved squatters' colonies on or after 1<sup>st</sup> January 1951 they would be given 'Arpanpatras' only after recovering the cost of land and development. However, in accordance with the Memo No. 5962 (65) –Rehab./18R-9/87, Dated, Calcutta the 8<sup>th</sup> Dec, 1988, the lease deeds for 99 years granted to the refugee settlers in urban areas were converted to free-hold deeds.<sup>172</sup>

**(c) General Measures:**

**(i) Medical Facilities:** The refugees had to go through a lot of pains and pangs to reach West Bengal. They arrived in West Bengal ragged and torn, in poor physical shape, and suffered from mal-nutrition. Thus, it was natural that the tuberculosis would be high among the refugees and thus, they put a severe sprain on the medical services of the State of West Bengal. The table<sup>173</sup> furnished below shows the frequency of the disease, albeit in the gross terms, among the refugees.

Spread of tuberculosis among the refugees between 1948-54

Year	No of the patients affected ( in thousands)
1948	1.4
1949	1.4
1950	1.4
1951	1.4
1952	2.1
1953	2.4
1954	2.4

The Central Government provided financial assistance for extending medical facilities to the migrants, in the shape of capital and recurring grants to many medical institutions for implementing certain schemes such as setting up and expansion of general hospitals, dispensaries, health centers, opening of T.B. Clinics, provision of mobile T.B. medical units, construction and reservation of T.B. and non T.B. beds, grant of special diet and maintenance allowance to T.B. patients and their dependents. Accordingly, till 1956, 492 beds had been reserved in various T. B. Hospitals and sanatoria in the eastern states.<sup>174</sup> During August 1956 and August 1957 the number of beds reserved for T. B. patients had been increased from 492 to 558. And sanction was accorded for putting up another 150

beds in the existing hospitals. Besides, setting up of a hospital with 250 beds at Pandabeshwar in West Bengal had been taken up. And a centre for domiciliary treatment of about 450 displaced T. B. patients was being set up in Calcutta.<sup>175</sup> During 1960-61, 597 beds were reserved for the free treatment of the displaced T.B patients from East Pakistan.<sup>176</sup> And till March 1968, the Central Government sanctioned Rs 721.43 lakh to the State Government out of which Rs 420.33 lakh was sanctioned up to 1960-61. The Residuary Assessment made a provision for another Rs 316.84 lakh whereas Rs 301.10 lakh was sanctioned by the Central Government.<sup>177</sup>

The table<sup>178</sup> furnished below gives an idea regarding the amount sanctioned by the Central Government for implementing the various schemes for extending the medical facilities to the old migrants:

Schemes	Amount Sanctioned (Rs. In lakhs)	
	Pre-Residuary Assessment (1948-61)	Post-Residuary Assessment (1961-68)
Non-recurring Grants		
1. For setting up new institutions.		
(a) General Hospitals, dispensaries and health centers	5.95	---
(b) T.B. chest clinics	13.40	8.21
(c) Domiciliary T.B. treatment through mobile units	7.80	---
Total	27.15	8.21
2. For extension of existing institutions.		
a) General hospitals, dispensaries and health centres	16.75	6.59
b) Construction of non T.B. beds.	20.24	161.99
c) Capital grants to T.B.	23.37	---

institutions.		
d) Construction of new T.B. beds.	8.31	---
e) Outdoor treatment and diagnostic facilities for T.B. patients.	2.58	---
Total	71.25	168.58
Recurring Grants		
a) Reservation of non T.B. beds.	4.04	3.63
b) Reservation of T.B. beds.	83.40	73.05
c) Outdoor T.B. treatment.	2.19	0.95
d) Domiciliary T.B. treatment through mobile units.	---	5.00
e) Maintenance allowance to T.B. patients and their dependants.	60.00	13.00
f) special diet allowance	52.30	---
g) Medical facilities in Camps and Homes	120.00	28.68
Total	321.93	124.31
Grand Total	420.33	301.10

But Government's response with regards to the refugee-health by and large was not satisfactory and it is clear from the table<sup>179</sup> below which gives an idea about the application- admission ratio of tuberculosis patients:

Admission into Government maintained 150 free beds at K.S. Roy T.B. Hospital, Jadavpur			
Year	Number of Application	Number of Admission	Percentage
1953	486	144	29.62
1954	580	96	16.55
1955 (up to August)	357	97	27.17

(ii) **Education:** Various measures were undertaken for educating the displaced students such as- grant of financial assistance in the form of loans, stipends, scholarships, books and stationery, exemption from tuition fees etc. During 1953-54, 1,019 Primary Schools were opened where about 1, 50,000 students started receiving education.<sup>180</sup> The number of Primary Schools were further increased and thus by 1956 there were 1,200 free Primary Schools ran by the Government and in West Bengal alone 4.8 crores had been spent on the education of the displaced persons.<sup>181</sup> By 1957, construction of buildings for 163 Primary Schools was sanctioned and 22 secondary schools and 18 colleges had been set up for the benefit of displaced students.<sup>182</sup> By 1960, schemes for the training of 1,155 teachers in West Bengal had been sanctioned and a training school at a capital cost of Rs. 1.30 lakhs had been set up for their benefit.<sup>183</sup> Till March 1968 the Central Government sanctioned about Rs.19.16 crore to West Bengal for setting up new institutions, expansion of existing institutions and for providing financial assistance to the refugee students. An abstract of expenditure<sup>184</sup> for imparting educational facilities in West Bengal till March 1968 is furnished in the table below:

Sl. No.	Item	1948-61(Rs. in lakhs)	1961-68 (Rs. in lakhs)
1.	Stipends, Book grants etc.		
	(a). Primary Schools	15.0	0.8
	(b). Secondary Schools	440.0	37.0

	(c). Colleges (including professional and technical courses)	170.0	4.7
		Rs. 625.0	Rs.42.5
2.	Capital grants for setting up new institutions		
	(a). Primary Schools	25.9	81.4
	(b). Secondary Schools	29.4	-
	(c). Colleges	92.5	-
	(d). Teachers' Training Institutions	1.3	35.6
		149.1	117.0
3.	Capital Grants for Expansion of existing institutions		
	(a). Primary Schools	-	2.5
	(b). Secondary Schools	112.5	191.5
	(c). Colleges	68.0	2.3
	(d). Teachers' Training Institutions		
	( additional seats)	-	12.6
	(e). Technical Institutions	59.2	-
	(f). Cultural Institutions	13.8	4.1
		253.5	213.0

4.	Recurring Expenditure (other than stipends etc.)		
	(a) GSFP Schools	227.0	-
	(b) Colleges	31.0	9.1
	(c) Teachers' Training Institutions (Primary School Teachers)	15.5	4.0
	(d) Education of orphans	56.8	19.5
	(e) Education of Handicapped	2.9	-
	(f) Schools in Camps and Homes	150.5	-
		483.5	32.6
	Grand Total	1511.3	405.1

The table furnished above shows that till 1948-61, the Government spent Rs.625 lakh for granting financial assistance to the refugee students. And during 1961-68 a sum of Rs. 42.5 lakh was sanctioned to the State Government for providing financial assistance to 75,000 Old Migrant students.<sup>185</sup>

**Industrial, Vocational and Technical Training Schemes:** Till 1954 main emphasis was on vocational training and the trades covered by the vocational training courses were tailoring, knitting, cutting, book binding, printing, mat making, manufacture of leather goods etc. From 1954 onwards, instead of vocational training, emphasis was on technical training of general nature and to engineering and other specialized and supervisory trades. Training of drafts men, fitters, turners, machinists, mechanics all these were included to technical training of general nature. During 1953-54, 11,000 displaced persons from East Pakistan got training and 6,000 more were under training.<sup>186</sup> In 1955-56 the training programme was adapted to the need of the country for technical personnel and a decision

was taken for the continuation of the programme through the Second Five Year Plan. However, later on, the Government agreed to transfer the management of these training centres to the respective State Government as the technical training institute and centre could not perform satisfactorily. However, till 1956 about 21,000 persons had been trained in various trades and another 5,500 were undergoing training<sup>187</sup> and till August 1957 these number got increased to 27,000.<sup>188</sup> In 1958 decision was taken to rationalize and integrate the training programme with the normal training in the State and recognize it as per the changing needs of the industry. Accordingly, it was decided to introduce the three year diploma course in the civil, mechanical and electrical engineering trades, instead of short time certificate course for one year, with greater employment potential. And the total amount that was spent on vocational and technical training till 1960-61 was Rs. 283 lakhs. Over 45,000 Old Migrants took advantage of the training facilities.<sup>189</sup>

Very soon it became evident that the vocational and technical training facilities were not sufficient to ensure gainful employment and thus an acute need was felt for setting up various industries, both medium and small, and taking other such initiatives for generating employment opportunities for the displaced persons which were as under:

**Medium industries:** In 1954 a scheme of incentives was introduced to entrepreneurs who possessed sound technical plans for the establishment of medium industries and who undertook to appoint a fixed number of refugee workers, both skilled and unskilled. The incentives<sup>190</sup> offered, as Chakrabarty mentioned were:

- a. Allotment of factory sites to industrialists on installments basis and recovery of cost in five equated annual installments.
- b. Allotment of land and factory on rental basis for a period of 7 to 10 years.
- c. Loans up to 50 percent of the value of the machinery to the industrialists for a period of 7 to 10 years at a low rate of interest.
- d. Provision of water and electric supply at industrial rates.

During 1954-1956 all these facilities were extended to the refugee township colonies situated at Gayespur, Habra, Taherpur and Khosbas Mahalla. Simultaneously, a programme was undertaken for establishing industries at the refugee concentrated areas of Dasnagar, Risra and Kamarhati. Though the industrialists availed the opportunities offered, including a handsome amount of loan assistance of Rs. 140.72 lakhs, but they could not recruit the fixed number of the refugees in their industrial units. Till 1960, 16

medium industrial units started production and they were supposed to create 7,850 jobs for the refugees but in practice, these industries could provide jobs only to 1,759 refugees. At the same time, there were some industrial units who took the State Government's fund that made available by the Centre for generating employment to the refugees but they did not create a single job for the refugees. For instance, Adarsha Cotton Spinning and Weaving Mills Ltd., Bengal Fine Spinning and Weaving Mills Ltd., Bhagyaluxmi Cotton Mills Ltd., and Kusum Hosiery Mills received about Rs. 20.30 lakhs and were supposed to create 1,370 jobs for the refugees but in reality these industrial units could not offer a single job to the refugees.<sup>191</sup>

The Government did not keep in its hand the power to enforce the condition of the employment of the refugees, against which the loans were advanced. After distributing the sums the Government did not care to examine that why the industrialists who received the incentives failed to fulfill their commitments. Even it did not bother to recover the money from the industrialists who had misused the funds. In 1959 the Rehabilitation Ministry conducted a survey of these schemes that expressed that no realistic estimate of the costs as well as of the employment potential of the schemes were made prior to sanctioning loans. In the same way, the Estimates Committee expressed that unless a way is found for enforcing the primary condition of the industrialists employing displaced persons, it will only mean that the enterprising industrialists will take the advantage of rehabilitation funds not to rehabilitate the displaced persons, but to rehabilitate themselves.<sup>192</sup> However, the abuse continued.

**Small Scale and Cottage Industries:** Just like the medium scale industries the Central Government also made an attempt for the promotion of the small scale and cottage industries through giving financial assistance to the State Government. Thus, a high level discussion took place in 1956 and accordingly the Central Government gave financial assistance to the State Government and the Co-operative Societies for that purpose. In order to infuse the displaced persons with a spirit of self reliance, the Government had taken up a vigorous programme of encouraging co-operative enterprise among the refugees for starting cottage and small scale industries and also for running business enterprises of their own on a co-operative basis. Up to June 1956, Rs. 24.28 lakh was sanctioned to 59 Co-operative Societies formed by the refugees.<sup>193</sup> The State Government was entitled to sanction cottage industries involving expenditure up to Rs. 5,000 and small

scale industries costing up to Rs. 10,000 without the prior approval of the Central Government. Thus, Rs. 60.35 lakhs were sanctioned to the 446 small scale and cottage units till 1960 but here again the expected employment potential of 5,852 refugees was not actualized. However, by 1960 there were Government production centres that had employment potential of 1,700 persons. Besides, one training-cum-production centre was also established at Kamarhati where articles made of processed bamboos in the Japanese manner were produced.<sup>194</sup>

**Rehabilitation Industries Corporation:** In April 1959 The Rehabilitation Industries Corporation was formed as a Joint Stock Company with a view to creating effective machinery for setting up industries in both public and private sectors for providing employment to the displaced persons from East Pakistan.<sup>195</sup> It was decided that the Corporation would set up industries on its own or in partnership with private entrepreneurs in order to generate employment for the refugees from East Pakistan. The Corporation commenced its journey with an authorized share capital of Rs. 5 crore.<sup>196</sup> The total share capital paid up till May 1971 was 3.21 crore and the Government advanced to the Corporation a total amount of Rs. 3.77 crore. The management of the Corporation consisted of a Board of Directors, five industrialists of West Bengal and the representatives of the Ministries of the Commerce and Industries, Finance and Rehabilitation of the Government of India, and a permanent representative of the State Government. The following activities,<sup>197</sup> as noted by Chakrabarti, were included into the programme of the Corporation:

- a. Granting of loans and advances for setting up all types of industries, medium and small, and expansion of existing ones.
- b. Setting up of two industrial Estates, one at Bon Hooghly and another at Behala at Calcutta.
- c. Supervision of the sixteen sick medium industries transferred by the Rehabilitation Ministry.

The primary function of the Rehabilitation Industries Corporation was to create employment opportunities for the displaced persons from East Pakistan by granting loans and advances to the industrialists. But the Rehabilitation Industries Corporation had no way by which it could ensure that the loanees would employ the fixed number of refugees. By August 1960 the Rehabilitation Industries Corporation had sanctioned a total amount of loans of Rs. 1.20 crores to 19 industrial units which were likely to provide employments to 4,500 displaced persons.<sup>198</sup> But the employment potential of the refugee **workers** was

not actualized. Furthermore, the Rehabilitation Industries Corporation programme of setting up two Industrial Estates remained incomplete. Thus, in September 1960, the Rehabilitation Industries Corporation became a private Joint Stock Company whose administrative control was handed over to the Central Ministry of Commerce and Industry.<sup>199</sup> Ultimately, in 1961-62 it was decided that in future the emphasis should be on the establishment of industrial units by the Rehabilitation Industries Corporation and accordingly it took over certain departmental production centers from the Governments of West Bengal and Tripura in 1962.<sup>200</sup>

**Provision of Direct Employment:** the State Government took initiatives for creating direct employment opportunities for the refugees by expanding the Calcutta State Transport Corporation with loans from Ministry of Rehabilitation. It was the more meaningful and successful step that the State Government took for creating direct employment opportunities as a total number of 3,332 refugees found employment in the Calcutta State Transport Corporation as bus drivers, conductors and cleaners etc.<sup>201</sup>

And an organization, known as Contracts Division, was set up in West Bengal to employ displaced labor on the rehabilitation works and till August 1957, 2, 05,000 displaced persons found employment in service and a sum of about Rs.14 lakhs had already been disbursed to displaced persons by way of wages and for supply of materials.<sup>202</sup>

#### **Nature of the Disbursement of Loans for the Non-Camp Refugees & Squatters**

The refugees who did not take shelter in the Government camps were known as non-camp refugees. The State Government made proposal for giving rehabilitation assistance to the non-camp refugees whose applications were received up to 30 April 1959 and which were pending. Thus, on 30 April 1959, there were 36,328 loan applications pending that demanded Rs. 366.79 lakhs. The Central Government finally reduced that demanded amount to Rs 228.15 lakhs and finally the amount that it sanctioned was Rs 179.15 lakhs and the actual amount that the State Government could utilize was Rs. 149.77 lakhs.<sup>203</sup> And the State Government estimated Rs. 343.28 lakhs of fund to deal with the squatters who would be given alternative accommodation and from whom applications were expected after 30 April 1959.<sup>204</sup> Against the State Government's demand for Rs. 343.28 lakhs for loan applications submitted after 30 April 1959, the total rehabilitation loan

provision finally sanctioned in 1961-1962 in the residuary assessment was Rs. 200 lakhs. And that sanctioned amount was allocated in the following manner:<sup>205</sup>

(a) Squatters on properties covered by Competent Authority and Evacuee Properties Act cases.	Rs. 100 lakhs
(b) Hard Cases	Rs. 30 lakhs
(c) Revalidation cases, i.e. cases in which the time limit for disbursement was originally 31.3.61 and extended subsequently.	Rs. 40 lakhs
(d) Miscellaneous	Rs. 30 lakhs
Total	Rs. 200 lakhs

However, the actual amount that the State Government received was Rs. 107.07 lakhs and out of that sum the State Government utilized only Rs. 70.49 lakhs till 31 March 1966.<sup>206</sup>

The Committee of Review of Rehabilitation Work in West Bengal calculated that the number of the non-camp refugees in urban areas did not exceed 2, 49,450 families. While in the rural areas the total number of families who got rehabilitation benefits was 3.84 lakhs that included both the non-camp and camp families. The number of families waiting for regularization in the squatters' colonies was about one lakh. If all these families including those who had already been assured of rehabilitation assistance were taken into account then the total number became 7.33 lakhs. The total number of refugee families was about 16 lakhs and thus the refugees who did not at all get any rehabilitation assistance numbered 8.67 lakhs.<sup>207</sup> The refugees who entered into West Bengal between 1<sup>st</sup> April 1958 and 31<sup>st</sup> December 1963 were written off. The Refugee Rehabilitation Committee recommended that land purchase and house building loans should be given to at least 50,000 of the 60,000 homeless and extremely helpless families whose applications for loans for house building and land purchase had been lying with the Government since 1951-52.<sup>208</sup> Thus, the result was that only about 18 percent of the non-camp refugees got

land purchase and house building loans.<sup>209</sup> It is worth mentioning here that the Government regarded the Camp refugees as its first duty to be solved. However, under the rural and urban housing schemes only about 3, 93,970 persons or 78,794 families received the benefit of the housing scheme that was less than half of the nearly 8 lakh camp refugees.<sup>210</sup>

### **Schemes for Refugees of Ex-camp Sites**

It has already been noted that the Government decided to shut down all the relief camps in West Bengal by July 1959. Of the 45,000 refugee families who were living in the various camps in West Bengal 10,000 refugee families would be resettled in West Bengal and the remaining 35,000 refugee families would be sent to other states including Dandakaranya. But when 10,000 refugee families out of that 35,000 refugee families refused to move to Dandakaranya in July-September 1961 the Government gave a two month's notice asking the refugees either go to Dandakaranya or leave the camps with payment of an amount equal to six month's dole. But they rejected the offer of six month's cash doles and continued to stay in the relief camps and the worksite camps. Though the Government did not evict them from the camps but stopped the supply of doles, medical and educational facilities, water supply etc. By then there were 74 ex-camp sites in West Bengal. The district-wise break-up of the refugees<sup>211</sup> in the different ex-camp sites was as under:

Sl. No	Districts	Number of Ex-camp sites	Number of Rehabilitable families
1.	Bankura	4	164
2.	Birbhum	9	573
3.	Burdwan	22	2,488
4.	Hooghly	5	596
5.	Howrah	2	274
6.	Midnapore	5	408
7.	Murshidabad	5	684

8.	Nadia	1	1,068
9.	24 Parganas	21	2,312
	Total	74	8,567

Finally, the Central Government accepted the problem of rehabilitation of the ex-camp site refugees. Thus, during 1963-64, a sum of Rs. 23.92 lakhs was sanctioned as housing loan for 1,477 displaced ex-camp families who were still living in different camps.<sup>212</sup> The Committee of Review of Rehabilitation was also asked to look into the problem of the refugees living in the ex-camp sites and vagrant's homes and suggest measures for its way out. By 1969 the Committee of Review of Rehabilitation submitted three reports- the first dealt with the ex-camp site families at Asrafabad and other Vagrant's Homes, the third report dealt with all the ex-camp site families except Bagjola work-site camps and the sixth report dealt with Bagjola group of work-site camps, on the basis of its findings and made recommendations for the rehabilitations of those families. The main recommendations<sup>213</sup> of the Committee of Review of Rehabilitation for the rehabilitation of the ex-camp site refugee families were as under:

1. The ex-camp site squatter families should, as far as possible, be settled in their present sites of squatting or in nearby areas.
2. Land should be acquired for the ex-camp site families on a high priority basis. In order to reduce the cost of acquisition of land covered by ex-sites land should be acquired as far as possible under the Land Development and Planning Act of 1948 according to which compensation was payable at 1946 rates.
3. No distinction should be made between old and new squatters on ex-camp sites. Both these categories should be eligible for rehabilitation assistance.
4. Ex-camp sites located on lands belonging to different Government Departments should be released expeditiously by the Government for the settlement of the squatters.
5. The ex-camp site families should be given assistance at the rate admissible to new migrants settled outside West Bengal, i.e. Rs. 2,000 per family in urban areas and Rs. 1,250 in the rural areas.
6. The house-building loan should not be given in more than two installments.
7. For the purpose of development and housing assistance semi-urban areas should be treated as urban.
8. The size of homestead plots would vary between two and three cottas in urban areas, four and five cottas in semi urban areas and six and ten cottas in rural areas.

9. The development cost in the urban areas would be Rs. 1,500 per plot and that in rural areas Rs. 600 per plot.
10. Surplus land if available should be given to the agriculturist families for agricultural/horticultural pursuits with proper irrigation facilities and other inputs.

The Committee of Review of Rehabilitation submitted its report to the Government of India in 1970. And the Refugee Rehabilitation Committee submitted its interim report in 1980. By then it found that 2,793 refugee families were awaiting rehabilitation at different camp sites in the districts of 24 Parganas, Hooghly, Burdwan, Birbhum and Nadia and the rest were rehabilitated.<sup>214</sup>

### **Schemes for the Vagrants' Homes Refugees**

The Committee of Review of Rehabilitation in its report, argued for taking a more flexible and rational approach towards the families living in Vagrants' Homes.<sup>215</sup> In 1959 there was a screening of the refugee population in the Vagrant's Homes that showed that between the years 1956 and 1957, 992 families comprising 3,903 persons were housed in the five homes. The break-up<sup>216</sup> of the refugees in the five Homes is given below:

Sl. No	Name of the Vagrants' Homes	Number of families	Number of persons
1.	Indralok Studio, Tollygunge	338	1,423
2.	Cossipore, Calcutta	337	1,294
3.	Ballichak, Midnapore	94	359
4.	Mankar, Burdwan	154	555
5.	Sitarampur, Burdwan	69	272
	Total	992	3,903

The State Government conducted a survey in April 1967 of these Homes which expressed that the number of inmates of these Homes had decreased to some extent. The survey found that by then 689 refugee families consisting of 3,039 refugees were living in those 5

Vagrant's Homes. The Committee of Review of Rehabilitation recommended a total financial implication of Rs. 47.38 lakhs for their rehabilitation.<sup>217</sup>

### **Schemes for the Permanent Liability Camps/Infirmaries**

It has already been noted that the children, women, old and infirm refugees who had lost their guardians in East Pakistan or in course of their uncertain move towards West Bengal or other such places in India due to communal riot or other such unwanted incidents they were regarded as the permanent liability of the Government. Because they did not have any able-bodied adults to look after them and most of them were not rehabilitable. Thus, the Government constructed a number of special institutions that came to be known as Permanent Liability Homes/Camps and Infirmaries to accommodate those orphans, destitute, unattended women, old and infirm persons with or without dependants. They were provided with accommodation, cash doles for food, clothing and blankets, educational, medical and training facilities. Besides, grants were given for the marriage of the girls and remarriage of the eligible widows. While deserving refugees who lived outside of the Homes and Infirmaries got cash doles. By March 1956 there were 46,700 inmates in the Permanent Liability Camps in West Bengal<sup>218</sup> and by 1957 the Government had to construct 27 Permanent Liability Camps/ Homes and Infirmaries for such refugees. These refugees were put under the charge of the Central Ministry of rehabilitation. They were given training in spinning, weaving, tailoring, paddy husking, dyeing, printing, pottery making, bakery etc. and by 1956 there were 22 training centres and 36 non-residential training centres aided by the Government for these persons.<sup>219</sup>

Fresh admissions into Homes and Infirmaries had been stopped from May 1958.<sup>220</sup> The administrative control of the Homes and Infirmaries in West Bengal were transferred to the Ministry of Education with effect from December 1, 1962.<sup>221</sup> But the fresh influx in 1964 made all these Camps/Homes and Infirmaries so overcrowded. The Government formed many committees followed by several Conferences for studying the problems of the inmates in detail and making recommendations to solve it. Between 1954 and 1959 seven official and non-official bodies considered the problem of the inmates and submitted seven reports. There was no serious attempt to handle their problems except the marginal improvement of the condition of the inmates of the camps. The rate of dispersal of the rehabilitable camp dwellers was very much slow and it was proved by the fact that in 1960, 42,000 and in 1970, 25,000 refugees were living in the Permanent Liability Camps

and Infirmaries. At the same time, there were some Permanent Liability families in the various ex-camp sites scattered over the various districts of West Bengal. The district-wise break-up of the Permanent Liability refugees in the different ex-camp sites<sup>222</sup> was as under:

Sl. No	Districts	Number of Ex-camp sites	Number of P. L. Families
1.	Bankura	4	4
2.	Birbhum	9	25
3.	Burdwan	22	33
4.	Hooghly	5	26
5.	Howrah	2	26
6.	Murshidabad	5	14
7.	24 Parganas	21	30
	Total	68	158

The Committee of Review of Rehabilitation regretted over the unrealistic and inadequate maintenance grant provided to the inmates of the Permanent Liability Camps/Infirmaries and recommended that they should get adequate educational and medical facilities. The Refugee Rehabilitation Committee constituted by the Left Front Government while considering the problems of the Homes and Infirmaries found that 14 Permanent Liability Camps situated in the 4 districts of West Bengal i.e. 7 in Nadia, 4 in 24 Parganas, 2 in Hooghly and 1 in Midnapore. There were 3,442 families who were inmates of these existing Homes and Infirmaries and 493 non-dolee ex-inmate families awaiting rehabilitation benefits. It was also found that 1,385 of the 3,442 inmates were purely Permanent Liability families and thus they were the permanent charge of the Government. 378 families were clearly identified as fit for rehabilitation and the remaining 1,679 families are dolees. The Refugee Rehabilitation Committee believed that the 1,679 dolee families might also be sent to the rehabilitation sites after careful scrutiny. The Refugee

Rehabilitation Committee recommended that three of the four restructured and reorganized camps should be sufficient for the 1,385 Permanent Liability families and the vacated camps should be utilized as the rehabilitation sites for the Permanent Liability families fit for rehabilitation. The Committee further recommended that the per capita maintenance allowance of the Permanent Liability families should be enhanced to at least Rs. 100 per month keeping in mind the steady rise in the price level.

### **VII. Measures for the In-between migrants**

The displaced persons who migrated between April 1958 and December 1963 may be termed as in-between migrants who were not recognized as refugees by the Government and thus there was no Government branding of these refugees. They were considered to be incompetent for rehabilitation assistance.<sup>223</sup> And this was done, as the Government explained, to discourage migration from East Pakistan. This policy, however, could not stop the influx of the displaced persons into West Bengal as the attacks on the minorities in East Pakistan were repeated time and again and it led to the commencement of another great wave of migration and thus came into existence another category migrant that was termed as New Migrants.

### **VIII. Measures for the New Migrants**

It has already been noted that the Government took the decision not to provide any rehabilitation assistance to those who entered India after 1<sup>st</sup> April 1958. Consequent upon the communal disturbances in East Pakistan in 1964 the minorities of that country started migrating to India. Considering the circumstances in which the members of the minority communities were being forced to migrate to India, the Government of India took the decision to ease the conditions for the issue of migration certificates. It was decided that rehabilitation benefits should be made available to the migrants coming to India on migration certificates issued on or after the 1<sup>st</sup> January 1964 and the migrants who came without any travel documents in that case if the Government of the State to which they migrated from East Pakistan certified that they were bonafide migrants and they had come to India on or after the 1<sup>st</sup> January 1964. Besides, decision was taken in this regard that those who came on Pakistani passport and surrendered them might also be treated as competent for relief and rehabilitation assistance.<sup>224</sup> It was further decided that the problem of the New Migrants should be dealt with on a national basis.<sup>225</sup>

From the January 1, 1964 to the middle of October 1964, migration certificates were issued to over 4.27 lakhs of displaced persons.<sup>226</sup> It was considered that genuine migrants seeking migration certificates were able to obtain the same without hindrance. Hence, the Central Government decided to restrict, with effect from the November 1, 1964, benefits of relief and rehabilitation to those persons who entered India from East Pakistan with migration certificates.<sup>227</sup>

The new migrants presented a statistical problem as no survey was undertaken to determine their number. However, it was recorded that from January 1964 to January 31, 1965, 8, 94, 137 migrants entered India, of those 6, 09, 999 persons sought shelter into West Bengal. And out of those 8, 94, 137 migrants 2, 61, 889 came with migration certificates, 1, 76, 602 with Pakistani Passports and Indian visas and rest with no travel documents.<sup>228</sup>

An idea of the district wise distribution of the new migrants can be had from the table<sup>229</sup> given below:

District	Percentage wise Distribution of the New Migrants Population
Nadia	51
24 Parganas	30
Murshidabad	3
Malda	2
Jalpaiguri	1
West Dinajpur	4
Coochbehar	9
Total	100

The New Migrants were provided shelter in tents or hutments in the camps. They were provided with the monthly cash doles varied from Rs 30 to Rs 70, clothing, utensils, essential articles such as rice, sugar, cremation and Sradh grants (Rs. 30 on each occasion), marriage grants etc. For the rehabilitation of the New Migrants, in Dandakaranya as well as various states, the Reclamation Organization of the Dandakaranya Development Authority was constituted into a separate office, known as Rehabilitation and Reclamation Organization under the Ministry of Rehabilitation with effect from November 1, 1964. For providing occupation to the New Migrants, other than agriculture, fourteen schemes of small scale industries were sanctioned up to January 31, 1965 at a total estimated expenditure of Rs. 17.19 lakhs in the States of Assam, Andhra Pradesh, Orissa and Uttar Pradesh.<sup>230</sup>

The Rehabilitation Industries Corporation Limited was transferred to the Ministry of Commerce and Industry with effect from September 1, 1960. In view of the heavy influx from East Pakistan since January 1964 and the necessity of providing employment in industries the administrative control of the Corporation was again transferred to the Ministry of Commerce and Industry (now Ministry of Industry and Supply) with effect from October 28, 1964. The Corporation sanctioned loans to the extent of Rs. 1, 06, 07, 000 and was running 23 industrial Units and 2 industrial estates. By 1965, 5, 280 displaced persons were employed in the industrial units which were run by the Corporation and by the firms to whom accommodation had been allotted in the Industrial Estates. And 50 percent of the vacancies in the Eastern Region and 25 percent in the vacancies in the other areas in the Class III and Class VI posts of the Defence Establishments were reserved for the new migrants. Furthermore, in the competitive examinations held by the U.P.S.C., fee concessions for submission of application forms and age concessions up to three years in excess of normal upper age limit were given to the New Migrants. At the same time, the maximum age limit to enter into Government service was relaxed up to 45 years for them. In April 1964, requests were made to the State Governments for making arrangement of medical facilities for the New Migrants in the camps run by them and they were asked to send the detailed proposal to the Central Government in this regard. A large number of New Migrants were sent to Dandakaranya and accordingly the Dandakaranya Development Authority was entrusted with the task of establishment and running of the transit camps for the New Migrants at Mana, Kurud, Nowgaon, Bhanpuri, Sabri and DBK

Railway.<sup>231</sup> And as noted earlier, during the year 1965-66 about 1,200 persons from amongst New Migrants were moved to Betapur and Mayabunder in Middle Andaman.

A slight change was made in respect with the amount of cash doles paid to the New Migrants as from 1<sup>st</sup> January 1966, decision was taken to pay Rs. 75 instead of Rs 60 to the families having more than 6 members. However, a migrant in camps who earned Rs.4 or more a day as wages from long term employment was not given any dole. In January 24, 1966, the Rehabilitation Ministry had become the Department of Rehabilitation and a part of the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Rehabilitation with a view to contributing a stepping-up of the pace of rehabilitation through employment schemes. The screening conducted in the various relief camps revealed that 70 percent of the migrant families were agriculturists. The settlement of agriculturist families on land offered by various states outside of West Bengal was made partly on the basis of individual allotment of holdings and partly on the basis of allotment of land to groups of settlers on a group farm basis. And under both the schemes the agriculturists would be given financial assistance for constructing houses, purchasing agricultural implements, seeds, fertilizers and manures as well as maintenance assistance. Apart from the cost of homestead plot of about Rs. 200, the ceiling of financial assistance in the case of families resettled on individual holding were about Rs. 3,455 per family while it was about Rs. 3,265 per family for those resettled on group farms.<sup>232</sup>

And for the resettlement of new migrant families in non-agricultural occupations following rehabilitation assistance was prescribed:<sup>233</sup>

Items	Rural Areas	Urban Areas
Housing Loan	Rs. 1,200.00	Rs. 4,100
Land	Rs. 200	Rs. 600
Construction	Rs. 1,000	Rs. 2,000
Development	Rs. 600 (as grant in case, land was developed by the State Government)	Rs. 1,500

Business Loan	Rs. 500 to Rs. 1000	Rs. 200 to Rs. 2000
Construction of Business premises	Rs. 200	Rs.500
Maintenance grant	Rs. 30 to Rs. 70 for three months to each family.	Rs. 30 to Rs. 70 for three months to each family.

As per the programme drawn up by the Ministry, proposal was made to settle 2,500 New Migrant families during 1965-66 and another 1,800 families during the year 1966-67 in non-agricultural occupations in the various states at a total estimated cost of Rs. 68 lakhs and Rs.60 lakhs respectively.<sup>234</sup>

In 1967 the Committee of Review of Rehabilitation was asked to evaluate nature and extent of the problem created by the New Migrants. It was also asked to recommend financial assistance for technical training, employment, educational and medical facilities for the New Migrants. Thus, the Committee of Review of Rehabilitation recommended that the Central Government should give financial assistance in the shape of capital grants and recurring expenditure in order to extend educational facilities to the New Migrants. It further recommended for the construction of new school buildings and expansion of the existing schools in the refugee concentrated zones. It expressed that there should be a hundred percent coverage of the New Migrants at the primary level.

The Committee of Review of Rehabilitation also made some recommendations for extending medical facilities to the New Migrants. It recommended that New Migrants concentrated zones should be selected for reaching additional medical benefits to the greatest number of New Migrants. Medical facilities for both T.B. and non-T.B. patients should be suitably expanded in these zones. The Committee of Review of Rehabilitation suggested that medical facilities for the treatment of T.B. and non-T.B. patients belonged to the New Migrants should be augmented in the following way.<sup>235</sup>

Non T.B medical facilities	T.B. medical facilities
Setting up of new non - T.B. beds	Setting up T.B. beds

Expansion of treatment facilities for the outdoor patients	Expansion of domiciliary T.B. treatment facilities
--	--

### **Left Front Government and Rehabilitation Efforts**

In 1977 when the Left Front Government came to power in West Bengal there was a meaningful endeavor at tackling the refugee problem.<sup>236</sup> Though, in 1967 the United Front Government formulated a scheme of Rs. 250 crore for the proper refugee rehabilitation. The Congress Government, in 1972, also prepared a 'Master Plan for the Economic Rehabilitation of Displaced Persons in West Bengal' of Rs. 150 crore. This made suggestion that the benefits given to the Old Migrants should also be extended to the New Migrants in the interest of the total population of West Bengal, and made recommendation for the conferment of title to land, the remission of certain loans, regularization and development of the squatters' colonies and more opportunities for employment. However, the price tag of Rs. 150 crore demanded by the State Government was scaled down to Rs. 72.71 crore by the Central Government.<sup>237</sup> Meanwhile, the Central Government constituted the Committee of Review of Rehabilitation Work in West Bengal for the purpose of the evaluation of the working and the outcome of the various schemes undertaken in West Bengal under the residuary assessment of 1961-62 for the benefit of the Old Migrants and for identifying the problems of the New Migrants and suggesting measure for solving it. The Committee formulated 20 reports on the various problems of the refugee rehabilitation in West Bengal and completed its task in 1975. The Central Government also set up Working Group in 1975 with a view to assessing the 'residual' problems of the refugee rehabilitation in West Bengal and accordingly, the Working Group in its report recommended a total amount of Rs. 72.71 crore for the solution of the problem.<sup>238</sup> But this was all about as the Government did not undertake any attempt to implement the recommendations made by the Working Group.

In 1977 the Left Front Government submitted a memorandum to the 7<sup>th</sup> Finance Commission and demanded a capital outlay of Rs. 500 crore for the implementation of a rehabilitation scheme. Morarji Desai, the then Prime Minister, wanted specific data and schemes for the solution of the problems as a whole and accordingly the State Government constituted the Refugee Rehabilitation Committee immediately for conducting a survey of

the refugee population in West Bengal for an assessment of the priority sectors of refugee rehabilitation. The Refugee Rehabilitation Committee conducted a fairly comprehensive survey which covered almost one-third i.e. 5, 25,022 or 32.51% of the total refugee families in West Bengal. The survey expressed that 53.15% of the refugees reside in the squatters' and private colonies and if the refugee residences in rental houses, barracks and private lands and other places are added to it, then, the total percentage becomes 79.87. The survey also expressed that 82.91% of the total refugee families surveyed did not get any assistance on the part of the Government in terms of land and money. The survey further expressed that among the surveyed families 65.87% comes under the income slab of Rs. 101-500 per month, 5.31% comes under Rs. 501-1000 and 1.09% comes under the slab above Rs. 1,000 per month. In the same way, the survey expressed that among the surveyed population 3.17% did not have any fixed income, 3.18% earned Rs. 0-50, 20.72% earned Rs. 51-100 per month.<sup>239</sup> Thus, it is easily understood that most of the surveyed refugee population lived from hand to mouth where abject poverty was their ardent follower while many of them could not afford one-squire meal a day.

The Refugee Rehabilitation Committee after conducting the field survey made a proposal of Rs. 750 crore for a comprehensive rehabilitation cum development plan in 1980-81. The plan gave emphasis on several programmes currently under way such as recognition of the post-1950 squatters' colonies; granting of titles of homestead and agricultural land; and a final phase of assistance for a sizeable group of people at ex-camp sites, who had refused to leave the camps for Dandakaranya in 1961 even after all facilities including water and electricity, had been cut off.<sup>240</sup> In 1986, the Central Government gave recognition to 607 squatters' colonies. And later on Rajib Gandhi agreed to confer free title deeds to the plot holders of the squatters' colonies and all loans to the refugees had been exonerated.<sup>241</sup> In 1987, Rs 84 crore was sanctioned by the Central Government for the purpose of acquisition of land for the recognized colonies. In March 1994 the Union Cabinet took a favourable decision about provision of funds for the development of the colonies of the displaced persons in West Bengal. Thus, Phase-III programme for the development of refugee colonies @ 17,777/-per urban plot began. The Central Government approved an outlay of Rs. 78.27 crores for the purpose of complete development of remaining 44,025 plots of urban refugee colonies. In addition to that Rs. 25.66 (approx) had been allotted from 1996-97 to 1999-2000 for the development of colonies from the state budget. The detail report<sup>242</sup> was as under:

Year	No. of colonies developed	Amount sanctioned
1996-97	18	Rs. 3,96,52,796.00
1997-98	03	Rs. 1,95,79, 434.00
1998-1999	45	Rs. 9,99,70,509.00
1999-2000	117	Rs. 9,73,67, 096.00

And during the year 2000-2001 an amount of Rs.10 crores was allotted for the infrastructure development of the colonies.<sup>243</sup> There was another group of colonies named 998 groups of colonies which were not recognized by the Central Government. However, the Government of West Bengal took the decision which had been communicated to the Refugee Rehabilitation Commissioner, West Bengal, R. R. & R Dept. under the G. O. No. 3474-Rehab/S-715(RR)/95, Dated 29-12-95 for the conferment of free-hold title and right in respect of homestead land only to eligible refugee families living in squatters colonies not yet been recognized by the Government of India and were situated wholly on the lands belonging to the State Government.<sup>244</sup> And for being eligible for refugee status a displaced person should have migrated from the former East Pakistan on a date before 25-03-1971.<sup>245</sup>

A considerable number of the refugees and migrants also got rehabilitation in the places outside of West Bengal and the most notable among those places was Dandakaranya. The Dandakaranya Project however, could not attain the desired success as many refugee families deserted the rehabilitation site especially when in 1977 the Left Front Government came to power in West Bengal.

## Notes and references

1. Bandyopadhyay, Hiranmay, *Udvastu*, Sahitya Samsad: Calcutta, 1970, pp.60-61.
2. *Ibid.*, p.61.
3. Chakrabarti, Prafulla, K., *The Marginal Men, The Refugees and the Left Political Syndrome in West Bengal*, Noya Udyog: Calcutta, 1999, p.1.
4. *The Second Year*, The Publications Division, Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, Govt. of India, 1949, p.77.
5. Bandyopadhyay, Hiranmay, *op.cit.*, p.46.
6. Chakrabarti, Prafulla K., *op. cit.*, p. 209.
7. Chakrabarti, Saroj, *With Dr. B. C. Roy and Other Chief Ministers*, Vol.1, Published by Rajat Chakrabarti, Calcutta, 1947, p.107.
8. *Ibid.*, p.109.
9. Chakrabarti, Prafulla K., *op. cit.*, p.15.
10. *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 14 March, 1948.
11. Bandyopadhyay, Hiranmay, *op.cit.*, p.31.
12. Chakrabarti, Prafulla Kumar, *op. cit.*, p.27.
13. Bandyopadhyay, Hiranmay, *op.cit.*, p.57.
14. *The Fourth Year, 1951*, United Press, Delhi, p.125.
15. *The Third Year, Part-1*, The Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1950, pp.78-79.
16. Bandyopadhyay, Hiranmay, *op.cit.*, pp.59-60.
17. Jawaharlal Nehru in his historic message to the nation on 15<sup>th</sup> August, 1947 pronounced; we have also our brothers and sisters who have cut off from us by political boundaries and who unhappily cannot share at present in the freedom that has come. They are all of us and remain of us whatever may happen and we shall be sharing their good and ill fortunes alike. Das, Samir Kumar, 'State response to the refugee crisis- relief and rehabilitation in the east', in Samaddar, Ranbir,(ed.), *Refugees and the State: Practices of Asylum and care in India, 1947-2000*, Sage Publication: New Delhi, 2003, p.112.
18. Bandyopadhyay, Hiranmay, *op. cit.*, p.63.
19. *Ibid.*, p.59.
20. *Ibid.*, p.67. Chakrabarti had drawn a vivid picture of the living condition of the Cooper's Camp. Chakrabarti, Prafulla K, *op. cit.*, pp. 157-58.

21. Chatterjee, Prashanta Kumar, *Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookerjee and Indian Politics -An Account of an Outstanding Political Leader*, Foundation Books: Delhi, 2005, p.252.
22. *Ibid.*, p.252.
23. The term *Muhajir* is used to explain persons who had travelled to Pakistan 'as a result of the partition of the fear of disturbances connected therewith. Persons who came for that reason are *Muhajir* for census purposes, no matter from where, when or for how long a stay they have come'. Chatterji, Joya, *Spoils of Partition – Bengal and India, 1947-67*, Cambridge University Press: New Delhi, 2007, p.166.
24. *Ibid.*, p.166.
25. Chakrabarti, Prafulla K, *op. cit.*, p.30.
26. Chakrabarti, Saroj, *op. cit.*, p.109.
27. Bandyopadhyay, Hiranmay, *op. cit.*, p.62.
28. Kudaisya, Ganesh, 'Divided Landscapes Fragmented Identities: East Bengal Refugees and their Rehabilitation in India, 1947-79' in Low, D.A, and Brasted, Howard, (ed.), *Freedom, Trauma and Continuities- Northern India and Independence*, Sage Publication India Pvt. Ltd: New Delhi, 1998, p.110.
29. *Ibid.*, p.110.
30. Das, Samir Kumar, *op. cit.*, in Samaddar, Ranbir,(ed.), *op. cit.*, p.118. Guharoy, Nagendra Kumar, *Daktar Bidhan Royer Jiban-Charita*, Orient Book Company, Kolkata, 1982, p. 225.
31. WBLA, Vol. XVII, No.2, 1957, p.152.
32. Bandyopadhyay, Hiranmay, *op. cit.*, pp. 137-138.
33. *The Sixth Year*, The Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broad Casting, Government of India, 1953, pp.52-53. *India –A Reference Annual 1953*, Ministry of Information and Broad Casting, Government of India, 1953, p.336.
34. Prime Minister Nehru also mentioned that fact in a letter written to Dr. B.C. Roy on October 25, 1952. As he said, 'The proposed introduction of the passport system naturally rather frightened people who thought that they might not be able to come later.' Gopal, S., (ed.), *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru*, Second Series, Volume Twenty, 19 October 1952-31 December 1952, Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial fund: New Delhi, 1997, p.317.
35. Bandyopadhyay, Hiranmay, *op. cit.*, p.195.

36. *Ibid.*, p.195.
37. Chatterjee, Nilanjana, 'The East Bengal Refugees A lesson in Survival' in Chaudhury, S., (ed.), *Calcutta: The Living City*, Vol. II, Oxford University Press: New Delhi, 1990, p.75.
38. *The Ninth Year of Freedom, August 1955-August 1956*, All India Congress Committee, New Delhi, p.151.
39. *Relief and Rehabilitation of Displaced Persons in West Bengal* (Statement issued by the Government of West Bengal on 15 December, 1958), cited in Chaudhury, P., 'Refugees in West Bengal. A study of the growth and distribution of refugee settlement within the CMD', Occasional Paper No. 55, Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Calcutta, 1983.
40. *The Twelfth Year of Freedom, 1958-59*, All India Congress Committee, New Delhi, p. 149.
41. *The Fourteenth Year*, The Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1961, p.5.
42. Chakrabarti, Prafulla K., *op. cit.*, p.464.
43. *Ibid.*, p.5.
44. *Ibid.*, p.464., According to ILO Report, 'From 1946 to mid 1970 4.2 million persons from East Pakistan registered as refugees in West Bengal, the annual influx reaching peaks of 9,25,000 in 1950 and 6,67,000 in 1964.' Lubell, Harold, *Urban Development and Employment: the Prospects for Calcutta*, ILO: Geneva, 1974, pp. 36-37.
45. Akhtar, Jamna Das, *The Saga of Bangladesh*, Oriental Publishers: Delhi-6, 1971, p.308.
46. Chatterjee, Nilanjana, 'Interrogating Victimhood: East Bengali Refugees Narratives of Communal Violence', p.4. Source: <http://www.pstc.brown.edu/chatterjee.pdf>, accessed on June 15, 2004.
47. Chakrabarti, Prafulla Kumar, *op. cit.*, pp.235-236.
48. Bandyopadhyay, Hiranmay, *op. cit.*, p.78.
49. *Ibid.*, p.11.
50. *Ibid.*, p.19.
51. *Ibid.*, pp.20-21.
52. *Ibid.*, p.22.

53. *Ibid.*, p.22-23.
54. *Ibid.*, p.31.
55. *Ibid.*, p.46.
56. *Ibid.*, pp. 46-47.
57. *Ibid.*, p.47.
58. In Howrah, there were two types of plans. It was fixed that it would have two parts- one part would be used to make sub-city and another part of the colony would be constructed in village environment. The sub-city was later named as Ashoknagar and the city dwellers took shelter there. And the second part was known as Kalyangarh. The refugees from new Alipore barracks were shifted there. *Ibid.*, pp.24-26.
59. *Ibid.*, p.49.
60. Chatterji, Joya, *op. cit.*, p.133.
61. It is not clear that why these islands were called as '*kalapani*'. It was perhaps because of the fact that the ship was heading towards a dreaded destination or probably it was called so because the sea is inkish blue in color.
62. *The Second Year, 1949*, The Publications Divisions, Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, Government of India, p.6.
63. Chakrabarti, Saroj, *op. cit.*, p.111.
64. Ray, Renuka, *My Reminiscences; Social Development during the Gandhian Era and After*, Allied Publishers Pvt. Ltd.: Delhi, 1982, p.151.
65. Bandyopadhyay, Hiranmay, *op. cit.*, p.152.
66. *Ibid.*, p.153.
67. *Ibid.*, p.154.
68. Ram, S. (ed.), *Andamanand Nicobar Islands-Past and Present*, Akansha Publication House: New Delhi, 2001, p.149.
69. *The Twentieth Year of Freedom, 1966-67*, editor, P. N. Vesuvala, All India Congress Committee, New Delhi, p.393-94.
70. Ray, Renuka, *op. cit.*, p.152.
71. Kudaisya, Ganesh, *op. cit.*, in Low, D.A, and Brasted, Howard, (ed.), *op. cit.*, p.124.
72. *Annual Report of the Department of Rehabilitation, 1956-66*, Department of Rehabilitation: New Delhi, Government of India, 1967, p.107.

73. The Statesman, 25<sup>th</sup> January 1948.
74. Chatterjee, Joya, 'Right or Charity? The Debate over Relief and Rehabilitation in West Bengal, 1947-50', in Kaul, Suvir, (ed.), *The Partitions of Memory: The Afterlife of the Division of India*, Permanent Black: Delhi, 2001, p.75.
75. Chakrabarti, Tridib, Ray Mandal, Nirupama, Ghosal, Paulomi (ed.), *Dhvanso –o- Nirman: Bangiya Udvastu Samajer Svakathita Bibaran* (in Bengali), D and P graphics Pvt. Ltd: Calcutta, 2007, pp. 11-12.
76. Sengupta, Nitish, 'Paschimbanger Udbastu: Kendra Rajya Dandva Rajneeti' in Ghosh, Semanti, (ed.), *Desh Bhag: Smriti ar Stabdhatta (Bengali)*, Anima Bishwas: Kolkata, 2008, pp-58-59.
77. *Ibid.*, p.59.
78. *The Seventh Year*, Published by the Director, The Publication Division: Delhi, 15<sup>th</sup> August, 1954, pp.17-18.
79. Chakrabarti, Prafulla K., *op. cit.*, p.251.
80. *Ibid.*, p.30.
81. *Ibid.*, p.250.
82. *Ibid.*, p.257.
83. Chakrabarti, Saroj, *op. cit.*, pp. 140-142.
84. *Ibid.*, p.143.
85. Chatterjee, Joya, *op. cit.*, in Kaul, Suvir, (ed.), *op. cit.*, p.77.
86. Memo no. 5610(13) F.R. from the Secretary, Relief and Rehabilitation Department, Government of West Bengal to all district officers, dated, 22 November 1948, in GBIB 1838/48 cited in *Ibid.*, p.78.
87. Chatterjee, Joya, *op. cit.*, in Kaul, Suvir, (ed.), *op. cit.*, p.77-78.
88. *Ibid.*, p.104.
89. Memo No. 5610 (13) F.R., from the Secretary, Relief and Rehabilitation Department, Government of West Bengal to all District Officers, dated 22 November 1948, in GB IB 1838/48 cited in *Ibid.*, p.78.
90. Memo no. 800(14) R.R. from the Secretary, Relief and Rehabilitation Department, Government of West Bengal, to all District officers, dated, 15 February 1949, cited in *Ibid.*, p.79.
91. However, the Government later on decided to shut off all the relief and transit camps in West Bengal by 31 March 1958 and denied to recognize any immigrants

- as displaced or a refugee in need of relief and rehabilitation after that date. But the ultimatum for closing the camps in West Bengal was again extended to July 1959.
92. Chatterjee, Joya, *op. cit.* in Kaul, Suvir, (ed.) *op. cit.*, p.79.
  93. Memo No. 8637 (13) Rehab., From J.K. Sanyal, Assistant Secretary to the Government of West Bengal to all District officers, dated 9 December, 1949, cited in *Ibid.*, p. 79.
  94. Chatterjee, Joya, *op. cit.* in Kaul, Suvir, (ed.) *op. cit.*, p.80
  95. The squatters' colonies were later classified into three categories-(a) 149 Group: this group of colonies was established immediately after Partition, (b) 175 Group: The working Group established by the Government of India vide Memo No.18 (2)/75-Rh dt. 2.27.75 for consideration of the residual problems of rehabilitation of the displaced persons in West Bengal recognized the existence of this group of colonies established up to 16<sup>th</sup> December 1971, and (c) 607- Group: this group of colonies came into being after 1<sup>st</sup> January, 1951 but prior to 25<sup>th</sup> March 1971. There was another new Group of colonies i.e. 998 Group. *Manual of Refugee Relief and Rehabilitation*, Government of West Bengal, Calcutta, 2001, pp.17-26.
  96. Chakrabarti, Tridib, Ray Mandal, Nirupama, Ghosal, Paulomi (ed), *op. cit.*, p.13.
  97. Chakrabarti, Prafulla K., *op. cit.*, p.36.
  98. *Ibid.*, p.36.
  99. *Ibid.*, p.64.
  100. *Statesman*, 3<sup>rd</sup> April, 1950.
  101. *Statesman*, 18 May, 1950.
  102. Chatterjee, Partha, 'The Political Culture of Calcutta' in Chaudhury, S.,(ed.), *op. cit.*, p.29.
  103. Bandyopadhyay, Hiranmay, *op. cit.*, p. 188.
  104. Chakrabarti, Prafulla K., *op. cit.*, p.289.
  105. It may be noted that the Government of West Bengal took decision that it would not take the responsibility of the rehabilitation of those refugees who entered into West Bengal after 1954. Bandyopadhyay, Hiranmay, *op. cit.*, pp. 315-16. However, the Central Government did not stop giving relief and rehabilitation in West Bengal till 1958. It was only in 1958 it was decided that henceforth only

- those refugees would have the benefit of rehabilitation who would take rehabilitation outside of West Bengal.
106. The Ministry of Rehabilitation came into being in September 1947 to deal with the gigantic problem of mass migration consequent upon Partition and the Ministry was entrusted with the task to provide shelter, food and clothing to those displaced persons who sought shelter into the Indian Union. *The Third Year (Part One)*, The Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1950, pp.69-79.
  107. Bandyopadhyay, Hiranmay, *op. cit.*, p.138.
  108. *India: A Reference Annual 1953*, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, p.348.
  109. *Rehabilitation of Refugees: A Statistical Survey 1955*, W. B. Statistical Bureau: Calcutta, 1955, p.1.
  110. *The Seventh Year of Freedom, August 1953-August 1954*, All India Congress Committee: New Delhi, p.279.
  111. Relief camps were constructed to give the refugees immediate succor while the transit camps were constructed to accommodate those refugees who were supposed to be sent to the outside of West Bengal. As instant arrangement could not be made for their travel so they were housed in the transit camps. Thus, transit camps were the midway asylum for those refugees. Though, later on decision was made to send the refugees directly to the rehabilitation sites yet ultimately the Government had to leave the plan midway as the refugees were entering into West Bengal in ever increasing number and unevenly that hindered the pace of rehabilitation. And many were supposed to be sent to the other states of India. Permanent liability camps were constructed for those refugees who did not have able bodied male guardians. The permanent liability camps were situated in Dhudkundi in Midnapore, Bansberia in Hooghly, Chandmari, Chamta and Dhubulia in Nadia, Habra, Ashoknagar and Titagarh in North 24 Parganas. And colony camps were constructed to provide the refugees with developed sites of housing while the worksite camps were meant for keeping the able bodied refugees engaged in working places meant for ultimate rehabilitation of the camp people where they assisted in the development of the area.

The inmates of the women's camps were also the permanent liability members comprising mostly of the women and children who did not have any male member of their family to look after them. No male member was allowed to enter into the women camps without the prior permission of the camp authority and that was the difference between the permanent liability camps and the women's camps. Many of the inmates of these women camps however, were permanently rehabilitated in the subsequent period along with their family members in and around the camp area.

112. Bandyapadhyay, Hiranmay, *op. cit.*, p.232.
113. Fact Finding Committee's Report quoted in Committee of Ministers' Report, p.9.
114. Das, Samir, *op. cit.*, in Samaddar, Ranabir,(ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 128.
115. Fact Finding Committee Report quoted in Committee of Ministers Report, p.11.
116. Bandyapadhyay, Hiranmay, *op. cit.*, pp.233-34.
117. *Ibid.*, p.234.
118. Cakrabarti, Prafulla K., *op. cit.*, p.244.
119. Fact Finding Committees' Report quoted in Committee of Ministers' Report, p.7.
120. Das, Samir, *op. cit.*, in Samaddar, Ranabir,(ed.), *op. cit.*, p.131.
121. Cakrabarti, Prafulla K., *op. cit.*, pp. 244-46.
122. *Ibid.*, p. 246.
123. Report of the Committee of Ministers for the Rehabilitation of Displaced Persons in West Bengal, Calcutta: Manager, Gol Press, 1954, p.14.
124. Fact Finding Committees' Report quoted in Committee of Ministers' Report, p.15.
125. Chakrabarti, Prafulla K., *op. cit.*, p.248.
126. *Ibid.*, p.248.
127. *The Eighth Year, April 1954-March 1955*, The Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, p.15.
128. Report of the Committee of Ministers for the Rehabilitation of the Displaced persons in *West Bengal*, Manager of Publications: Calcutta, Government of India, 1954, p.3.
129. *Ibid.*, p.4.
130. Chakrabarti, Prafulla K., *op. cit.*, p.248.
131. *Ibid.*, p.249.
132. *Ibid.*, p.214.

133. *The Seventh Year of Freedom, August 1953-August 1954*, All India Congress Committee, New Delhi, p.283.
134. *The Tenth Year of Freedom, August 1956-August 1957*, All India Congress Committee, New Delhi, p.22.
135. *The Ninth Year of Freedom, August 1955-August 1956*, All India Congress Committee, New Delhi, p.438.
136. *The Twelfth Year of Freedom, 1958-59*, All India Congress Committee, New Delhi, p. 149.
137. *The Fifteenth Year of Freedom 1961-62*, All India Congress Committee, New Delhi, p.165.
138. *The Twelfth Year of Freedom, 1958-59*, All India Congress Committee, New Delhi, pp. 149-150.
139. *The Sixth Year*, The Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1952-53, p.53.
140. *The Seventh Year of Freedom, August 1953-August 1954*, All India Congress Committee, New Delhi, pp.280-88.
141. Chakrabarti, Prafulla K., *op. cit.* p.237.
142. *Ibid.*, pp.209-10.
143. *Ibid.*, p.222.
144. Bandyapadhyay, Hiranmay, *op. cit.*, pp.239-240.
145. *Ibid.*, p.240.
146. The migrants were assured of rehabilitation on the lands that would be reclaimed by their labor. However, after the land was reclaimed the local people forcibly seized the land and the migrants were denied the lands they reclaimed. These camps were subsequently converted into transit camps and the migrants of these camps were given the option of moving out side of West Bengal for their rehabilitation or leaving the camp with a lump grant of cash doles of six months. But they turned down the offer and became squatters on the ex-camp site and gradually became integrated into the economy of the area. The Bagjola Scheme aimed at improving the drainage and sanitation in a gross area of 92 Squire Miles adjacent to Calcutta. *The Seventh Year of Freedom, August 1953-August 1954*, All India Congress Committee: New Delhi, p.74.
147. Bandyapadhyay, Hiranmay, *op. cit.*, p.344.

148. *Relief and Rehabilitation of Displaced Persons in West Bengal*, Calcutta, Home (pub.) Dept. Government of West Bengal, 1956, p.18.
149. *India: A Reference Annual 1955*, The Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, p.468.
150. *The Ninth Year of Freedom, August 1955-August 1956*, All India Congress Committee, New Delhi, p.152.
151. *Ibid.*, p.153.
152. *The Tenth Year of Freedom, August 1956-August 1957*, All India Congress Committee, New Delhi, p.170.
153. *The Tenth Year*, The Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1957, p.15.
154. *The Twelfth Year of Freedom, 1958-59*, All India Congress Committee, New Delhi, p. 150.
155. *The Thirteenth Year*, The Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, August 15, 1960, p.218-219.
156. *The Nineteenth Year of Freedom 1965-66*, All India Congress Committee, New Delhi, p.414.
157. *The Thirteenth Year of Freedom 1959-60*, All India Congress Committee, New Delhi, p.167.
158. *The Fourteenth Year*, The Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1961, pp. 230-231.
159. *The Fourteenth Year of Freedom 1960-61*, All India Congress Committee, New Delhi, p.140.
160. *The Fifteenth Year of Freedom 1961-62*, All India Congress Committee, New Delhi, p.163.
161. *The Ninth Year of Freedom, August 1955-August 1956*, All India Congress Committee, New Delhi, p.438.
162. 'In 1956, a Development Committee was appointed by the State Government and the Committee prescribed the standard of development for G.S. Colonies of non-agriculturist in rural areas.' *Manual of Refugee Relief and Rehabilitation*, Government of West Bengal, Calcutta, 2001, p.27.
163. *Ibid.*, p.27.

164. *The Tenth Year of Freedom, August 1956-August 1957*, All India Congress Committee, New Delhi, p.170.
165. *The Sixteenth Year of Freedom, 1962-63*, All India Congress Committee, New Delhi, pp.150-151.
166. *The Nineteenth Year of Freedom 1965-66*, All India Congress Committee, New Delhi, p.414.
167. *Manual of Refugee Relief and Rehabilitation, Government of West Bengal, Calcutta, 2001*, p.27.
168. *Ibid.*, p.27.
169. *Ibid.*, p.266-300.
170. *Ibid.*, p.27.
171. Conferment of right and title on displaced persons over lands in Govt. sponsored and approved Squatters colonies in West Bengal, To the Secretary to the Government of West Bengal, Refugee relief and Rehabilitation Department, from Ministry of Supply and Rehabilitation, Govt. of India, Letter no 28(4)/73-RE, Dated 17-05-1974 cited in *Ibid.*, p.178.
172. *Ibid.*, p.163.
173. WBLA, Vol. XV, No.2, 1957, p.31.
174. *The Ninth Year of Freedom, August 1955-August 1956*, All India Congress Committee, New Delhi, p.153.
175. *The Tenth Year of Freedom, August 1956-August 1957*, All India Congress Committee, New Delhi, p.172.
176. *The Fourteenth Year*, The Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1961, p.233.
177. Chakrabarti, Prafulla K., *op. cit.* p.307.
178. Committee of Review of Rehabilitation Report on the Medical Facilities for New Migrants from Erstwhile East Pakistan in West Bengal, pp.12-14.
179. WBLA, Vol. XIV, No. 1, 1956, pp. 234-35.
180. *The Seventh Year of Freedom, August 1953-August 1954*, All India Congress Committee, New Delhi, pp.282-283.
181. *The Ninth Year of Freedom, August 1955-August 1956*, All India Congress Committee, New Delhi, p.152.

182. *The Tenth Year of Freedom, August 1956-August 1957*, All India Congress Committee, New Delhi, p.171.
183. *The Thirteenth Year*, The Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, August 15 1960, p. 221.
184. Committee of Review of Rehabilitation Report on Education Facilities for New Migrants from Erstwhile East Pakistan in West Bengal, p.8.
185. Cakrabarti, Prafulla K., *op. cit.*, p.301.
186. *The Seventh Year of Freedom, August 1953-August 1954*, All India Congress Committee, New Delhi, p.282.
187. *The Ninth Year of Freedom, August 1955-August 1956*, All India Congress Committee, New Delhi, p.153.
188. *The Tenth Year of Freedom, August 1956-August 1957*, All India Congress Committee, New Delhi, p.171.
189. Cakrabarti, Prafulla K., *op. cit.*, p.311.
190. *Ibid.*, p.312.
191. *Ibid.*, p.314.
192. Ninety-Sixth Report of the Estimates Committee, 1959-60, (Second Loksabha), p.33.
193. Das, Samir Kumar, *op. cit.*, in Samaddar, Ranabir,(ed.), *op. cit.*, p.130.
194. Cakrabarti, Prafulla K., *op. cit.*, pp.315-16.
195. *The Twelfth Year of Freedom, 1958-59*, All India Congress Committee, New Delhi, p. 149.
196. *Ibid.*, p. 151.
197. Cakrabarti, Prafulla K., *op. cit.*, pp.316-317.
198. *The Fourteenth Year*, The Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1961, p.234.
199. *Ibid.*, p.234.
200. Cakrabarti, Prafulla K., *op. cit.*, pp.317-318.
201. *Ibid.*, p.316.
202. *The Tenth Year of Freedom, August 1956-August 1957*, All India Congress Committee, New Delhi, p.171.
203. Cakrabarti, Prafulla K., *op. cit.*, p.261.
204. *Ibid.*, p.261.

205. *Ibid.*, pp. 262-263.
206. *Ibid.*, p.263.
207. *Ibid.*, p 295.
208. *Ibid.*, p .295.
209. *Ibid.*, p.264.
210. *Ibid.*, p.265.
211. Committee of Review of Rehabilitation Work Report on Rehabilitation of Displaced Persons from Erstwhile East Pakistan in West Bengal, Third Report, p.24.
212. *The Seventeenth Year of Freedom 1963-64*, All India Congress Committee, New Delhi, p.215.
213. Chakrabarti, Prafulla K., *op. cit.*, p.272-73.
214. *Ibid.*, p.278.
215. The Vagrants' Homes came into being as a consequence of the clearing operation of the refugees of the Sealdah Station in 1956 and they were declared as vagrants by a Special Magistrate under Section 7(1) of the Bengal Vagrancy Act of 1943 and ordered to be detained under Section 10 (1) of the Act pending conclusion of final enquiries as decided by the Magistrate. The police rounded them up and the State Vagrancy Directorate took charge of them. They were sent to the Indraloke Studio, Tollygunge, Cossipore, Mankar, Ballichak and Sitarampore. Magestrial orders, after conducting prolonged enquiries, confirmed them as vagrants. And for about nine years, they continued to subsist under restrictive orders of a Magistrate under the Bengal Vagrancy Act. In 1965 these orders were withdrawn under Section 18 (1) (d) of the Act. Vagrancy Directorate shook off the accountability of maintaining them in the Homes. The refugees in the Homes challenged the legality of this decision in the High Court. On 16<sup>th</sup> March 1966 the High Court ruled that the status quo should be maintained but not specifically ordered for the restoration of doles. The Government sneaked out of the responsibility of paying doles with niggard opportunism. The refugees continued to stay in the Vagrants Homes without any means of subsistence. *Ibid.*, pp.267-68.
216. *Ibid.*, p.268.
217. *Ibid.*, p.270.

218. *The Ninth Year of Freedom, August 1955-August 1956*, All India Congress Committee, New Delhi, p.439.
219. *Ibid.*, p.439.
220. *The Twelfth Year of Freedom, 1958-59*, All India Congress Committee, New Delhi, p. 150.
221. *The Sixteenth Year of Freedom, 1962-63*, All India Congress Committee, New Delhi, p.150.
222. Committee of Review of Rehabilitation Work Report on Rehabilitation of Displaced Persons from Erstwhile East Pakistan in West Bengal, Third Report, p.24.
223. Those who migrated on or after April 1, 1958 were not competent for relief and rehabilitation as displaced persons. Though, some of the Santhal families which migrated East Pakistan during April to July 1962 due to communal disturbances were taken to Dandakaranya for resettlement. *The Sixteenth Year of Freedom, 1962-63*, All India Congress Committee, New Delhi, p.149.
224. *The Eighteenth Year of Freedom 1964-65*, All India Congress Committee, New Delhi, p.326.
225. *The Seventeenth Year of Freedom 1963-64*, All India Congress Committee, New Delhi, p.218.
226. *The Eighteenth Year of Freedom 1964-65*, All India Congress Committee, New Delhi, p.326.
227. However, the Governments of West Bengal, Assam and Tripura were authorized temporarily to exercise some discretion in favour of genuine migrants and to allow relief and rehabilitation benefits to those migrants whose bona fides were established even though they might have come without the migration certificates.
228. *The Eighteenth Year of Freedom 1964-65*, All India Congress Committee, New Delhi, p.327.
229. Committee of Review of Rehabilitation report on Medical facilities for New Migrants from Erstwhile East Pakistan in West Bengal, p.36.
230. *The Eighteenth Year of Freedom 1964-65*, All India Congress Committee, New Delhi, p.327-331.
231. *Ibid.*, p.332-335.

232. *The Nineteenth Year of Freedom 1965-66*, All India Congress Committee, New Delhi, pp.395-402.
233. *Ibid*, p. 404-405.
234. *Ibid.*, p.405.
235. Committee of Review of Rehabilitation Report on Medical Facilities for New Migrants from Erstwhile East Pakistan in West Bengal, p. 39.
236. Chakrabarti, Prafulla K., *op. cit.*, pp.320.
237. Chatterjee, Nilanjana, *op.cit.*, in Chaudhury, Sukanta, (ed.), *op. cit.*, pp.76-77.
238. Working Group Report on the Residual problem of Rehabilitation, p.72.
239. Chakrabarti, Prafulla K., *op. cit.*, pp.321-24.
240. Chatterjee, Nilanjana, *op.cit.*, in Chaudhury, Sukanta, (ed.), *op. cit.*, p.77.
241. Mukherjee, Samar, 'Rehabilitation of the Bengali refugees in eastern and north-eastern India: an unfinished struggle', in Roy, Sanjay K., (ed.), *Refugees and human rights Social and political dynamics of refugee problem in eastern and north-eastern India*, Rawat Publications: Jaipur, 2001, p.142.
242. *Manual of Refugee Relief and Rehabilitation*, Government of West Bengal, Calcutta, 2001, p.28.
243. *Ibid.*, p.28.
244. *Ibid.*, p.26.
245. *Ibid.*, p.131.