Partitioned Lives: Migrants, Refugees, Citizens in India and Pakistan, 1947-65

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Document Type
Book

Publication Date
2012

Abstract
*Partitioned States* offers new perspective in the histories of Partition and its aftermath by connecting it to the long, drawn out and skewed formation of new national entities: India and East Pakistan. The book focuses on the Bengal Partition and locates its narrative within the intersection of long term cross border movement, chronic small-scale violence, the emergence of a document regime, and biased national refugee policies, all of which contributed to the formation of national citizenships in India and East Pakistan.

This book argues that minorities -- Hindus in East Pakistan, Muslims in eastern India -- and the discourse over their citizenship and national identity were central to the project of nation building. However, rather than being automatic after 1947, the identity of Indians and Pakistanis were produced, often constructed arbitrarily, through the discretionary powers of lowly officials as through legislation emerging out of parliaments over the next two decades.

The product of several years of archival research in Calcutta, Dhaka, Delhi, and London, *Partitioned States* is the first to examine the experience of Partition from both sides of the Bengal border. It urges for a rethinking of the Bengal Partition, which continues to inform the contemporary politics of India and Bangladesh. (Publisher’s Website)
The book is divided into three sections. The first of these focuses on the creation of borders and how both India and Pakistan tried to regulate movement across them. In delineating the work of the five-member boundary commission in chapter 1, Haimanti Roy also shows how the public exhibited a great interest in the process and tried to “own” it by writing petitions and pamphlets. It was as if “the Bengali public felt that they had a stake in their future and could possibly influence it” (40). In section 2, the author makes use of the two legal instruments of the Evacuee Property Act of 1951 in East Pakistan and the Indian Citizenship Bill to exhibit how the two countries were negotiating their processes of nation building and citizenship.