



**Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee  
Research Foundation**



# CAA

grants new life of

# Dignity

Persecuted Voices from Sindh, Pakistan



**Maximum number of refugees that have come from Pakistan are from Dalit families**

This law is to protect people who have been religiously persecuted in Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh. People should understand that the maximum number of refugees that have come from Pakistan are from Dalit families. Daughters are subject to atrocities there, they are forcefully wedded and then forcefully converted. Because they were exploited like this, they came to India and have been living amongst us for a long time in different parts of the country. I want to ask the people who claim to do politics for Dalits. Why were you quiet for so long? Why couldn't you see the difficulties of Dalits? Today if the Modi government is taking action to resolve the biggest problem in the lives of these Dalits, why are you getting anxious?

**- PM Shri Narendra Modi** at Ramlila Ground, New Delhi on 22<sup>nd</sup> December, 2019



**Either they were killed or converted or they came to India as refugees to protect their dignity and religion**

It was our imagination that the citizens who are minority here and who are minority in the neighbouring country, would live a life with dignity, would be able to follow their religion with dignity, will be able to protect their family with dignity. But when we look at them after decades, the bitter truth that comes out is that, the minorities in Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh did not get a life with dignity. The minorities were persecuted there. Pakistan and East Pakistan (Bangladesh) of that time had around 20% population of minorities. After all where did those people go? Either they were killed or were converted or they came to India as refugees to protect their dignity and religion. Those people who are saying that we are indulging in vote bank politics, I would like to tell them that we had made this promise before the nation during the election, which was supported by the public of this nation.

**- Union Home Minister Shri Amit Shah** on Citizenship Amendment Bill 2019 in Rajya Sabha on 11th December 2019



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>1. Introduction</b>	4
<b>2. Promises</b>	6
Duty towards those who fear - <b>Mahatma Gandhi</b>	6
<b>Jawaharlal Nehru's</b> promise of Citizenship	6
Rehabilitation of Displaced - <b>Dr. Rajendra Prasad</b>	6
<b>3. Experiences</b>	7
Hindus as second-class citizens - <b>Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya</b>	7
Our Policy towards Refugees is 'Neti Neti Neti'	8
- <b>Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee</b>	
Failure of the Nehru-Liaquat Pact	10
- <b>Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee</b>	
It is a Moral Obligation - <b>Sucheta Kripalani</b>	15
Uprooted, Plundered, Humiliated - <b>Thakur das Bhargava</b>	16
Dr B.C. Roy's Letter to Nehru: <b>Govt's Refusal to Recognise the Refugee Problems in East Pakistan</b>	17
Horrors in Pakistan – a Left Leader's Lament - <b>Prof Samar Guha</b>	18
<b>4. Positions</b>	19
Committed to the minorities in Pakistan	19
- <b>Comrade Bhupesh Gupta</b>	
Urgent Question of Rehabilitation - <b>Resolution adopted by CPI at Amritsar in 1958</b>	20
Humane approach for citizenship - <b>Comrade Prakash Karat</b>	20
Atrocities on Tribals and Communist Leaders in Pakistan	20
Safeguarding the Uprooted - <b>Sri Gulzarilal Nanda</b>	21
<b>5. Testimonies of Refugees from Sindh, Pakistan</b>	23

# Introduction

Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) has granted a new life of hope to the large number of refugees who were forced to abandon their home and hearth in India's neighbourhood because of religious persecution and to seek refuge in their civilizational motherland, India.

For decades after independence these beleaguered minorities from Pakistan, erstwhile East Pakistan and later Bangladesh and for a period from Afghanistan, were forced out of their countries because they professed a faith which was different from the dominant faith of the country in which they lived. At the time of independence they were promised protection in their countries and shelter and equal rights in India if they ever left their countries because of religious persecution and discrimination. These promises were made by a number of leaders, after independence a number of other leaders continued to speak for their rights, continued to highlight their plight but hardly ever did they attempt to settle the issue once for all.

Interestingly, it will be relevant to mention in this context, that in August 1966, Jana Sangh leader Niranjan Varma, then Member of Rajya Sabha, asked three pointed questions to the then Union External Affairs Minister Sardar Swaran Singh. These questions were:

- What is the present position of the Nehru-Liaquat Pact, which was concluded in 1950 after the last India-Pakistan conflict?
- Whether both the countries are still acting according to the terms of the Pact?
- The year since when Pakistan has been violating the Pact?

In his reply, Swaran Singh said, that the Nehru-Liaquat Pact of 1950 is a standing agreement between India and Pakistan. It requires each country to ensure that its minorities enjoy complete equality of citizenship with others and receive treatment identical to that available for other nationals of their country.

To the second question, Swaran Singh's answer was that though in India, the rights and security of the minorities have been continuously and effectively safeguarded, Pakistan has persistently contravened the provisions of the Pact through consistent neglect and harassment of the members of the minority community.



And, Swaran Singh's answer to the third question pointed to the failure of the Nehru-Liaquat pact. He said that, instances of such violations started coming to notice almost immediately after the inception of the Pact. This was exactly what Union Home Minister Amit Shah pointed out in his speeches in both House of Parliament in December 2019 and this was exactly what Dr Syama Prasad Mookerjee, had in the past, also proved in the House with facts and figures during a debate on 7th August 1950. It is strange therefore that some of the loudest opposition comes in from the Congress which has forgotten the facts and figures given in the past by its own leader and minister.

It was Bharatiya Jana Sangh from 1951 and later Bharatiya Janata Party which relentlessly continued to champion the rights of the refugees to live a life of dignity and equality in India. Leaders and parties, namely the Congress party and the communist parties who paid lip service to the cause of the refugees, often used them as political fodder yet hardly ever did anything to ameliorate their lot.

By passing the CAA Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Shri Amit Shah, have not only corrected a historic wrong, they have also fulfilled a historic promise, which no other party or leader had the courage or sensitivity to do in the past. The passing of the CAA further strengthens India's unity, it is a historic and civilizational act which is not aimed at taking away citizenship but at granting it to the beleaguered minorities in India's neighbourhood who, for decades and for historic reasons, have been victims of persecution and discrimination.

The plight of the refugees is best heard and absorbed in their words. Those opposing CAA, driven by duplicitous political motives, have no idea of the excruciating pain that these people had to undergo, they have never reflected on why these people had to forsake their well-settled lives and turn into refugees. This booklet is an attempt to tell that story. It not only compiles, as a ready reckoner, promises made by leaders in the past, but also through the narratives of some of them describes life in Pakistan for minorities. It has also included interviews of refugees – mainly from Sindh in Pakistan – who are in Delhi, so that beyond the rhetoric of false opposition one gets to listen to the true voices of the persecuted.

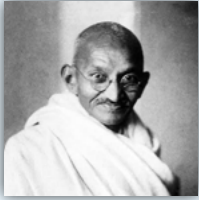
**Dr. Anirban Ganguly**

Director

Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee Research Foundation

# Promises

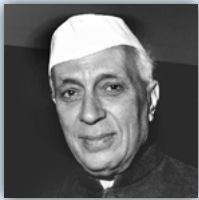
## Duty towards those who fear



**Mahatma Gandhi's** promise in a prayer meeting in Delhi on 16th July 1947:

"There is the problem of those who 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 foreigner 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 extended 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's promise of Citizenship



Assurance of **Jawaharlal Nehru**, in Parliament on 15th November, 1950:

"The Hon. Member referred to the question of citizenship. There is no doubt, of course, that those displaced persons who have come to settle in India are bound to have the citizenship. If the law is inadequate in this respect, the law should be changed."<sup>2</sup>

"Our duty to those who, 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>3</sup>

## Rehabilitation of Displaced



**Dr. Rajendra Prasad** on 26th January, 1950:

"We are anxious for rehabilitation of the displaced individuals, who have been subjected to a lot of difficulties and inconvenience. They are welcomed here, if they want to come".<sup>4</sup>

1. Cited in: Prafulla Chakrabarti, *The Marginal Men – the Refugees and the Left Political Syndrome in West Bengal*, Kolkata: Naya Udyog, 1999.

2. Source: Ministry of information and Broadcasting, *Jawaharlal Nehru Selected speeches*, Volume 2: 1949-53, New Delhi, Publication Divisions.

3. Cited in: Prafulla Chakrabarti, *The Marginal Men – the Refugees and the Left Political Syndrome in West Bengal*, Kolkata: Naya Udyog, 1999.

4. *Speeches of President Rajendra Prasad*, New Delhi: Publication Division, 'The Task Ahead', Chapter-1, 1955.

# Experiences

## **Hindus as second-class citizens**

*(The Constitution of Pakistan was formed in 1956. Islam was accorded the highest status with the words “The sovereignty of this country vests in Allah.”)*

### **Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya wrote:**



“...One particular Act of this constitution lays down that no new law can be made that is in opposition to the theological injunctions of the Quran and Sunnah. Laws that have been passed too will be accordingly amended. The Bill discriminates between Muslims and non-Muslims, and it is laid down that no non-Muslim can contest elections for the post of President or Vice-President. Islamic ideals and code of conduct will be applicable to both the country’s leaders and the government.”<sup>5</sup>

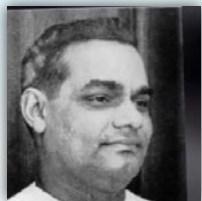
“As far as Hindus are concerned, they have been subject to boycott as second-class citizens. It is impossible for them to live with any dignity in Pakistan. More than a crore of Hindus have already migrated from Pakistan and their flight from that country has still not stopped. More than 20,000 people are crossing the border every month. If the proposed Constitution of Pakistan 1956 is passed, future of the minority communities in Pakistan will be dark...We believe that the Government of India must pay attention to these patently unfair and discriminatory sections of Pakistan’s constitution. We cannot ignore this by saying that it is Pakistan’s internal matter. The fate of Hindus in Pakistan is closely linked to us. Our duty lies in not merely safeguarding the rights of Hindus but also in ensuring that a feeling of insecurity does not get entrenched in their hearts. Any intimidatory change compels them to leave their homes and come to India. It is worth bearing in mind that we have taken the issue of South Africa’s apartheid to the United Nations and have been unsuccessfully trying to secure citizenship rights for Indians residing in Sri Lanka. Therefore, we cannot leave the Hindus of East Bengal to their fate.”<sup>6</sup>

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5. (Panchajanya, 23 January 1956) Complete Works of Deendayal Upadhyaya, Vol. 4.

6. (Organiser, 30th January 1956) Complete Works of Deendayal Upadhyaya, Vol. 4.

## **Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee on Refugees**



### **Our Policy towards Refugees is 'Neti Neti Neti'**

In the Vedas God has been described as “Neti, neti”-‘not this, not that’. God is not this, God is not that. These words, Neti, neti (No. No) very well describe the Government policy in respect of the problem of the Hindus in Kashmir and Goa and East Bengal. Will one-third of the territory of Kashmir be liberated on the strength of arms? No, no. Shall we gift it to Pakistan? No, no. Then what shall we do?

Shall we take police action in Goa? No, no. Then shall we permit a Satyagraha by the people? No, no. Then shall we leave Goa to the tender mercies of Portugal? No, no. It is the same with the Hindus who are being driven out of East Bengal. We are not prepared to pressurise Pakistan into observing the agreement arrived at the time of the Partition and treating Hindus in Pakistan with the same equality and respect as Muslims in India. This was the basis of the partition, and if Pakistan does not accept it we should think of resorting to other means. But we are neither prepared to put pressure on Pakistan not to demand territory for the resettlement of Hindu refugees. What is our policy? It can only be defined as ‘Neti, Neti’.<sup>7</sup>

### **Hindus being driven out of East Pakistan**

The attention of the whole country and of the House is focused on Hindus coming from East Pakistan. Apart from saying that they will be resettled the President's Address does not indicate any policy in this regard. At the time of Partition we had assured the Hindus of East Pakistan that we shall never be apathetic to the protection of their life, property and honour. The time has come to live up to that assurance. Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherjee had resigned from the Central Cabinet when there were riots in East Pakistan in 1950 and had prophesied that the Nehru-Liaquat Pact would not be able to protect the Hindus.

His prophecy has come true. But today there is no Minister from West Bengal in the Central Cabinet who would kick his chair and force the Government to change its policy. There is also no Central Minister like Sardar Patel who would say if Pakistan cannot protect the Hindus in its eastern part it will have to part with territory to resettle them. Prime Minister Nehru had also declared at that time that if Pakistan did not listen other methods would be adopted. Today the Prime Minister is not in a position

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7. (N.M. Ghatate edited, Atal Bihari Vajpayee – Four decades of Parliament – National issues- the twin Danger - Lok Sabha on May 15, 1957 during discussion on the Motion of Thanks on the President's address page No. 1-2)



to make such a declaration, but what will happen to the Hindus of East Pakistan?

There are no options open to them except to die or leave their religion or come over as refugees and take refuge in the lap of Bharat Mata. But even the doors are not open to them—they are given certificates of entry for only two days in a week. Our office in Rajshahi has been closed down. Will intending refugees now go to Dhaka for migration certificate? Who will look after their security? There are no arrangements for the safety of those who want to come over to India. They are being shot at. Last night I received a telegram from Tripura. With your permission I would like to read it

‘One lakh refugees crossed in continuous influx of thousands daily. On sixth evening just on the border Pakistan police fired on four thousand fleeing refugees from three sides. Hundreds shot dead. Many injured in hospitals. Thousand in Pakistan are stranded and being tortured.’

Under the Nehru-Liaquat agreement it was provided that they would be safely escorted to India. If the Pakistanis are not ready to abide by that agreement we should be ready to send our armed forces to escort those Hindus who want to come over to India. We cannot leave them to die in Pakistan.

It is not right on the part of Shri T.T. Krishnamachari [Union Finance Minister – 1956-58, 1964-66] to say we have only a moral responsibility towards them, not a constitutional and legal one. We are bound by the assurances we gave them. They are political and historic assurances. The partition of the country was done on the basis that justice would be done to the minorities in both countries. We have abided by that assurances. Pakistan has not. In a way the whole basis of establishing Pakistan has been set at naught.

### **Give Refuge to Refugees Generously**

We gave refuge to Parsis who came to our land with the sacred fire. Refugees from Tibet are living in this country. Is there not even that much humanity in our hearts for the Hindus of East Pakistan? What are we doing for them? It is said, what can we do? The first thing we can do is to allow in whoever wants to come and arrange for settling him. Even today the old refugees are lying on the streets of Sealdah. [In Kolkata]. Even they could not be resettled. If necessary the Finance Minister may include a rehabilitation levy in the new budget. No one in the country would hesitate to contribute something for the rehabilitation of these unfortunate brethren.

## **Let Leaders Go to East Pakistan**

On an unofficial level I would like to say that some of our leaders should go to East Pakistan. The trouble is, this government can neither talk the way Sardar Patel did nor can follow in the footsteps of Gandhiji. Why do the preachers of peace and non-violence not go to Dhaka and Khulna and see the condition of the Hindus there with their own eyes? Prof. Humayun Kabir could go. General Shah Nawaz Khan could go, Shri Fakhruddin Ahmed could go and say to the Muslims of East Pakistan-if you do not do justice by Hindus living in Pakistan, how can we do justice for Muslims in India?

But those swearing by Gandhiji are not willing to follow in the steps of Gandhiji. What is the condition of women in East Pakistan? Why does Dr. Sushila Nayar not go there, why not Governor [West Bengal] Padmaja Naidu? Smt. Indira Gandhi could spare a little time to go there?

**Shri Joseph Mathaini (Kerala):** Why don't you go too?

**Shri Vajpayee:** I am ready to go if anybody is ready to come. But our General Secretary has been externed from West Bengal. Who will allow entry into East Pakistan? Let us try for this on an unofficial level and seriously try to resolve this problem.<sup>8</sup>

## **Failure of the Nehru-Liaquat Pact**

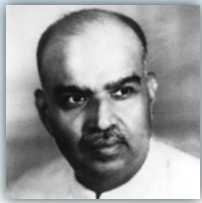
### **Congress leaders accept failure of Nehru-Liaquat Pact**

"The Congress party in Parliament is meeting tomorrow afternoon to discuss the Bengal situation to decide its attitude in regard to this problem [Hindu Exodus from East Bengal] which will come up for debate in Parliament on Monday. Members are taking deep interest in the question and a feeling is growing that the Nehru-Liaquat Ali Pact has failed in the main objective stemming the tide of Hindu exodus from East Bengal or creating any sense of confidence and security among the minorities of East Bengal. All available indications point to the conclusion that the Hindus cannot stay in East Bengal so long as it does not change its Islamic concept as a State. It is felt that a revision of the Pact in the light of these given realities is needed, as the hopes on which the pact was based on have been belied..."<sup>9</sup>

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8. (Ref:- Atal Bihari Vajpayee – *Four decades of Parliament* – Edited by N.M Ghatate-National issues- Country's future must not be Jeopardised- Rajya Sabha, on February 13, 1964. During discussion on the Motion of Thanks on the Vice President's address. Page No. 21-25)

9. 'Hindu Exodus from East Bengal – Congress M.P.s' Deep Concern', *The Sunday Statesman*, Sunday, August 6, 1950



**Dr Syama Prasad Mookerjee** – Excerpts from Discussion on the Bengal Situation, Parliament, 7th August, 1950:

### **What was the main Purpose of the Pact?**

“I ask, in all seriousness and with all humility: what was the main purpose of the Pact? [Nehru-Liaquat Pact] Was not the chief object of the pact that Hindus would be able to live in East Bengal with a sense of security and without fear; that there would be no exodus and those who had come away would gradually of their accord feel emboldened to go back to their home? Was it not the purpose of the Pact that there would be a sense of security in the minds of the minorities themselves so that they could decide on their own course of action without any fear or expectation or favour from any quarter? Judged from this standpoint the Pact has failed. The exodus continues; the intense sense of insecurity in the minds of the minority continues.... This is not my saying alone, this has been the saying of many leaders, the main test of the pact would be whether conditions of security are being created in East Bengal whereby Hindus can live out of their own freewill.”<sup>10</sup>

### **Unending Atrocities after the Pact**

“...So far as the incidents which have happened in East Bengal after the Pact, I have got a summary of some of them between 8th April [when the Nehru-Liaquat Pact was signed] and 30th June 1950. I have not been able to compile the list of occurrences in the month of July but these are incidents about which we have got the written evidence of individuals who have suffered or of families of individuals who have suffered. I shall only



**Dr. Syama prasad Mookerjee listening to the problems of refugees**

10. *The Bengal Situation – Text of Speech* – by Dr Syama Prasad Mookerjee in Parliament on 7th August, 1950,



read a summary of this list. Between the date of the Pact and 30th June 1950, there have been 757 cases of dacoity, robbery and theft, 219 extortion cases, 194 cases of trespass, 180 cases of assault, harassment and threats to leave Pakistan, 129 cases of abduction, rape and outraging the modesty of females, 70 cases of murder, 70 cases of grievous hurt, stabbing and looting, 67 cases of arson, 21 cases of wrongful confinement and restraint, 39 cases of defiling Hindu temples and places of worship and 72 cases of illegal possession. By no means, Sir, is this an exhaustive list. This is only an illustrative list of occurrences which have happened in East Bengal right upto 30th of June 1950, and spread almost throughout the length and breadth of Eastern Bengal. In every one of these cases, I should add, the minority i.e. the Hindu is the victim and the oppressor is a member of the majority community. The entire social and economic structure in which Hindus lived has collapsed and it is impossible for them to live there...”<sup>11</sup>

### **Nehru-Liaquat Pact fails the Hindus**

“...Look at the resolution which the Hindus now living in East Bengal have passed in Mymensing. I am not going to read it in detail because it runs into 7 or 8 pages. The Prime Minister has got a copy of it. What do they say? They say that conditions are in existence which if not changed will make it extremely difficult for any Hindu to live there...In paragraph 7 they have stated thus:

“This Convention regrets to note that in spite of the Nehru-Liaquat



**Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee arriving at Kakdwip to meet refugees**

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11. *Ibid.*



Agreement to rehabilitate the returned migrants in their original homes, most of the migrants, on return, are getting no help from the authorities and are living in pitiable, deplorable conditions, without any shelter, without any means of subsistence. Their own houses are under occupation of Muslim refugees from India and the arable land of these evacuees have been distributed to them. The efforts of the Members of the District Minority Board and the Minority Commission have so far been fruitless, and the indifferent attitude of Government [East Pakistan] is causing immense hardship to the returned people...”<sup>12</sup>



Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee visiting a refugee Camp at Nadia District in West Bengal

### **Unparalleled in world's history**

“...During my tours I have seen people fall at my feet and say, “All that we have suffered is because we are Hindus. That is the only crime we have committed and if we had given up our religion we would not have tortured in this way.” I do not think the world's history will ever record another such example were millions of people, educated and uneducated, simply because they loved their religion, were desecrated, butchered or driven out of their homeland, just because they could not get protection from the Government, which they are entitled to get...”

### **Death with Dishonour, Death without Dishonour**

“...There is one pathetic instance of a leading Congress man who Panditji knows. He is a man who is not afraid of his life, he is not a coward and he is still in East Bengal. He came to see me about three weeks ago and his words are still haunting me. He had been to West Bengal and moved about the place. He had seen the terrible misery of the millions of refugees who have come to West Bengal. In East Bengal there are thousands of Namasudras who are waiting to come over. He said to me – ‘If I come away thy will also come away, whatever happens to them. That is why I am sticking on there, though I know it is impossible for them to stay. I see nothing but death on either side, death in East Bengal and death in West Bengal but with this difference. In West Bengal it is death without dishonour whereas in East Bengal it is death with dishonour.’ That summarises the situation...”<sup>13</sup>

12. *The Bengal Situation – Text of Speech – by Dr Syama Prasad Mookerjee in Parliament on 7th August, 1950.*

13. *The Bengal Situation – Text of Speech – by Dr Syama Prasad Mookerjee in Parliament on 7th August, 1950.*

## Refugees Dying Everyday

“...If you look at the conditions of the refugees in West Bengal, if you go to Sealdah or to the camps, you will realise where rehabilitation has disappeared...If you look at the condition of the refugees and their sufferings you will be amazed how they are tolerating this state of affairs. Children are dying like flies. I have seen mothers with dead children on their laps. At Dhubulia [in Nadia district of West Bengal where camps were set up for refugees who were coming in large numbers from East Pakistan] I saw such a woman and she said, “It is not my first child whom I have lost after coming away here. This is the fifth.” You read the newspapers and see how people are dying at the Sealdah platform every day. Is that a credit to any Government that people should die like that for want of food, for want of clothing and for want of shelter?<sup>14</sup>

## What Crime have We Committed they ask?

“...One cannot stand there for ten minutes. Such is the horrible condition of the refugees. We cannot manage 15,000 people at Sealdah. How are we going to rehabilitate one crore people? You go to the camps and look at the death rate. I have got it on good authority that 50 per cent of the children may die. I have seen some children who do not look like human beings at all. They look like ghosts and shadows. People come and accost you and ask “What crime have we committed that we should be suffering like this?”

...Thirty per cent of the people may not live...They are facing the spectre of death, not for any fault of their own. They cannot get shelter and they cannot get work. They do not want to live as idlers and it is amazing how even today they raise their feeble voice and shout Bande-Mataram which they have not forgotten yet and shed tears...”<sup>15</sup>

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14. *The Bengal Situation – Text of Speech – by Dr Syama Prasad Mookerjee in Parliament on 7th August, 1950.*

15. *The Bengal Situation – Text of Speech – by Dr Syama Prasad Mookerjee in Parliament on 7th August, 1950. It has been historically demonstrated how the Nehru-Liaquat Pact failed to assuage the minorities of Pakistan and to provide them security. “Although commissions were set up under this agreement to facilitate the return of Muslim refugees to India and Hindus to Pakistan, they were unable to staunch the flow of Hindu refugees from Pakistan. Soon after signing of the Liaquat-Nehru agreement, one million more Hindus left East Pakistan...”*(Source: Farahnaz Ispahani, *Purifying the Land of the Pure: Pakistan's Religious Minorities*, New Delhi: Harper Collins, 2015, p.46. Farahnaz Ispahani, a Pakistani American writer and former politician who has served as member of the National Assembly of Pakistan between 2008 and 2012.)

## It is a Moral Obligation



Sucheta Kripalani speaking at a meeting on refugee problem in West Bengal at University Institute Hall.  
Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee (first-left) presiding over it.

### **Sucheta Kripalani**– Parliament, 8th February, 1950

“I met in Delhi some members of the Pakistan Legislature [Hindu members from East Pakistan] a few days ago. They came and told me that almost the same scenes as in Noakhali have been enacted in Khulna and other places. Now, where are those people to go? We cannot deny our responsibility towards those people. They were citizens of India. They fought for the freedom of India. But today unfortunately they have been left beyond the limits of India. We know that Pakistan has been following a systematic policy by which Hindus have been gradually pushed out. If Hindus of Eastern Pakistan are pushed out they will have to find shelter somewhere. We cannot close our eyes to that fact. Even if it is difficult for our economy to support it, we have to give shelter to those shelterless people. It is a moral obligation...”<sup>16</sup>

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16. 8th February 1950, Sucheta Kripalani Freedom Fighter, Gandhian, Member of the Constituent Assembly, Member of Parliament from New Delhi, first woman Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh (1963-67). She worked closely with Dr Syama Prasad Mookerjee during partition, especially in West Bengal...



## **Uprooted, Plundered, Humiliated**



**Thakur das Bhargava** – Parliament, 2<sup>nd</sup> February, 1950:

“As regards the external policy enumerated in the address I can say without any reservation that there would be no diverse opinions in this House. Yet I would like to tell you Sir, and also the Government that the people of India are not in the least satisfied with this present policy that is being maintained towards Pakistan. The Government may have justifications for maintaining this policy, but this is quite apparent that the policy that is being maintained towards Pakistan is soft and weak-kneed more than it is necessary .....Today we hear from East Bengal that 10,000 Hindus have been driven out in a body from there. I cannot understand how the one crore Hindus of East Bengal would be able to live there. What policy will the Government adopt under such circumstances is the question on everybody’s lips. Some time back Sardar Patel had given out that if more Hindus would be driven towards India then an area of land for rehabilitating them will also have to be transferred. How can we make provisions to rehabilitate those Hindus who are day after day migrating from East Bengal. At this time, I do not want to make a mention of the other activities of Pakistan, but hardly a day passes when our Hon. Ministers do not present before us quite new tales of oppression and outrage committed by Pakistan. Just now we have been told that some four and a half lakhs of Muslims have crossed into Assam from East Bengal and thousands of railway wagons have been held back by Pakistan. We daily hear of such things but I do not see any retort being given to these outrages, and so I am not in the least satisfied with the more than necessary soft and weak-kneed policy that our Government is maintaining towards Pakistan. This is not the solitary voice of me alone. Every day and in every walk of life we see such things. Under the pretext of rehabilitation each and every Hindu in Pakistan has been uprooted and plundered and then humiliated off to this country, and our policy is such that even after the promulgation of an Ordinance huge sums of money amounting to millions of rupees are regularly being drained off to Pakistan. We are not at all prepared to ratify this policy.”<sup>17</sup>

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17. *Parliamentary Debates, Volume 1, 1950, 2nd February, 1950. Pandit Thakur das Bhargava, Member of Parliament representing Hissar, Haryana from Indian National Congress 1952-57. He was also a member of the Constituent Assembly from 1947-50, Member of Provisional Parliament 1950-52*



## **Dr B.C. Roy's Letter to Nehru: Govt's Refusal to Recognise the Refugee Problems in East Pakistan**



Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee (third-right), Dr. B.C. Roy (fourth-right) & Shri Mohan Lal Saksena, Union Minister Relief & Rehabilitation surveying the border areas

“You are under the impression that your Government gave us a large grant for the purpose of ‘relief and rehabilitation’. Do you realise that the total grant received for this purpose from your Government is two years – 1948-49 and 1949-50, is a little over three crores and the rest about 5 crores was given in form of a loan. Do you realise that this sum is ‘insignificant’ compared to what has been spent for refugees from West Pakistan? ...For months the Government of India would not recognise the existence of the refugee problems in East Pakistan and therefore, would not accept the liabilities of their accounts...”<sup>18</sup>

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18. West Bengal Chief Minister, Dr B.C.Roy, letter to PM Nehru, 1 December, 1949, cited in: Prafulla Chakrabarti, *The Marginal Men: the refugees & the Left Political Syndrome in West Bengal*, Kolkata, 1999

## **Horrors in Pakistan – a Left Leader’s Lament**



**Prof Samar Guha**, close associate of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose and Forward Bloc leader in his book, *Non-Muslims behind the curtain in Pakistan*:

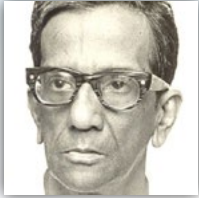
“A year of Pakistan rolled over. Soon a complete reversal of Govt. policy towards the conscious Hindus became glaringly manifest. East Bengal police suddenly became very active with repressive measures against the conscious non-Muslims. Large number of houses...were searched and many arrests made. At the time of house searches and arrest big army and police demonstrations were held to create a sense of terror in the mind of the non-Muslims. A further attack came upon the non-Muslims from the side of the Muslim mob...Cries of ‘saboteurs’, ‘enemy agents’, ‘fifth-columnists’, ‘disloyal elements’ etc. were raised by the Pakistan press and responsible officials and non-official Muslim leaders almost everywhere in East Bengal. Before a year of the new state was completed, virtually a reign of terror was let loose upon the life of both the urban and rural non-Muslims by the police as well as the officially inspired Muslim mob...Govt. propaganda made the Muslim masses firmly suspicious that every Hindu in Pakistan was a fifth column of the Indian Union...In many places, local boards and municipalities, having Hindu majorities, were arbitrarily suspended and their control taken over by the Govt...”<sup>19</sup>

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19.Extract cited in: A.J.Kamra, *The Prolonged Partition & Its Pogroms: testimonies on Violence against Hindus in East Bengal 1946-64*, New Delhi, 2000. Prof Samar Guha, Secretary of East Bengal Minorities Association, General Secretary of the Pakistan Forward Bloc, close associate of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, remained in East Pakistan after partition and was imprisoned in Dacca jail. He thereafter migrated to West Bengal in 1951. He was Secretary, West Bengal Forward Bloc and eventually became the Chairman. He was a Member, National Committee of Praja Socialist Party and Socialist Party closely associated with Jaya Prakash Narain's total revolution movement and became a Member of Parliament representing Janata Party in 1977. He remained a leader of Janata Dal (S) till his death in 2002. (Source: From Lok Sabha Member's page archives.)

# Positions

## Committed to the minorities in Pakistan



**Comrade Bhupesh Gupta**, CPI, Rajya Sabha, 4<sup>th</sup> March, 1964:

“...We are also committed to the minorities in Pakistan. We have signed the Nehru- Liaquat Pact and other agreements. We cannot escape our responsibility in regard to this matter, Sir. But then we have to face that responsibility within the four corners of a peaceful policy, a policy that is honourable, a policy that is decent and which answers the needs of human dignity as also attracts the attention of the world. Such should be our policy...”<sup>20</sup>

## Quest of life, settlement, rehabilitation

**Comrade Bhupesh Gupta**, CPI, Rajya Sabha, 27<sup>th</sup> July, 1970:

‘After all, those who are crossing into the frontier, they are not coming with political motives, they are not coming with the aim of supporting this or that party or of opposing this party or that party, they are coming here because of certain fears and apprehensions there, they are coming here in quest of life, in order to get settlement and rehabilitation. Let us treat them in a spirit of brother and sister taking brother and sister. Well, that is how, with a common national and human approach, we can correctly tackle and solve this problem.’<sup>21</sup>

## Solemn Assurances Broken

**Comrade Bhupesh Gupta**, CPI, Rajya Sabha, 3<sup>rd</sup> December, 1974:

“Sir, 27 years have passed since the country was partitioned. If you recall the speeches of the leaders of the Congress Party at that time, including in particular Jawaharlal Nehru, it will be known how at that time they gave clear assurance in their speeches, even before the country was partitioned, that they would fully meet the aftermath of partition and that they will do everything in their power as the Government to resettle and rehabilitate the displaced persons from that part of Bengal which as a result of partition went to Pakistan. It was a solemn assurance which was repeated not only to outsider or in press statements but also otherwise in many official statements of the Government of India...Sir it is necessary for the Government to give an explanation to the nation on why the assurances had been broken and how they came to be broken and who were responsible for it...

20. Motion in the Rajya Sabha brought in by Gupta on: “That the situation arises out of the communal disturbances in East Pakistan and the consequences flowing there from and the policies of the Government of India relation thereto, be taken into consideration”- (Cited in White Paper on Citizenship Amendment Bill, New Delhi: SPMRF, 2019.)

21. Cited in White Paper on Citizenship Amendment Bill, New Delhi: SPMRF, 2019.

## **Urgent Question of Rehabilitation**

*Resolution adopted by CPI at Amritsar in 1958:*

“Overwhelming majority of the four million displaced persons from East Bengal has not been at all rehabilitated and the unaccountable agony and suffering of these unfortunate men, women and children continue to grow every day. Their plight cannot but evoke the deepest sympathies of all and their problem is one that is eminently human as well as national...Expressing its full sympathy for the just cause of the refugees, the Congress calls upon the government to change its present attitude and policy towards displaced persons from East Bengal and accept their just demands...The extraordinary Congress urges upon the government to convene a conference of the representatives of the refugees and leaders of all political parties to discuss the urgent question of rehabilitation with a view to working out a correct rehabilitation policy which above all must be acceptable to the refugees themselves and inspire confidence among them...”<sup>22</sup>

### **Humane approach for citizenship**

Comrade Prakash Karat, CPI (M) General Secretary, had written to Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh on May 22, 2012 regarding the citizenship problems of Bengali refugees. His letter reads thus:

“This is to draw your attention to the citizenship problems of the large number of refugees from erstwhile East Bengal and then even after the formation of Bangladesh who had to flee their country in particular historical circumstances over which they had no control. Their situation is different from those who have come to India due to economic reasons. While we advocate a humane approach to all sections, on the specific issue of citizenship we share the opinion you had strongly advocated as leader of the opposition when it was debated in parliament in 2003.”

### **Atrocities on Tribals and Communist Leaders in Pakistan**

The following is a description of how the East Pakistan establishment handled the activists, leaders, protestors of the Tebhaga Andolan [‘three-part movement’] for allotting two-thirds of land produce to the tenant, one third to the owner]. [Spearheaded by the Kisan Sabha, the peasant front of the Communist Party of India in 1946-47 which continued over the next few years, the movement, in East Pakistan/East Bengal was led by leading lights of the CPI. This shows how the tribals – Santhals – and the Communist Party leaders were treated by Pakistan:

“...Village after village was indiscriminately burnt down, peasants were

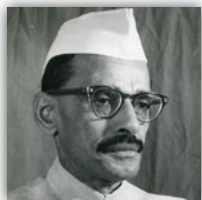
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22. Cited in White Paper on Citizenship Amendment Bill, New Delhi: SPMRF, 2019.



beaten and tortured mercilessly. They created a reign of terror by free looting, and raping of the Santal women went at will. 24 Santal peasants succumbed to death due to police torture inside Nachole police station. Innumerable peasants were killed in Nawabganj and Rajshahi Jails. One of the notable leaders of the movement Ila Mitra [leader of the CPI, leading the Santals in the Tebhaga andolan, was imprisoned for life in East Pakistan, was severely tortured in jail, and finally released on parole in 1954 and came to Kolkata for treatment. Being a Hindu and a communist party member, Mitra did not return to Pakistan and stayed on in India] was brutally tortured in various ways including rape. The pervasive and multi-directional torturing compelled several Santal peasants to emigrate to West Bengal...”<sup>23</sup>

### **Safeguarding the Uprooted**



Statement of **Sri Gulzarilal Nanda**, Union Home Minister in Rajya Sabha, 5<sup>th</sup> March, 1964:

“...when that security fails, when the minorities in that country, for whom we have in the earlier years entered into some arrangements with that country, suffer, if those arrangements break down and the minorities there are subjected to atrocities and brutal treatment, the brunt of the consequences has to be borne by us ultimately...But something more happens to them, that is, those people find that it is not all possible for them to stay on there; that is, their honour is not safe, their lives are not safe. Then, Sir, the situation becomes somewhat different. Then those people, because they are uprooted, because their houses had been set on fire, because there is arson and looting, find it impossible for them to stay on there, and they struggle to escape to India, and the consequences flow for us...If there was a way of preventing their exodus, their influx, into this country we should try to find out. But if there is no way, then the door has to be kept open for these people...”

23. Source: Sukumar Biswas & Hiroshi Sato, *Religion and Politics in Bangladesh and West Bengal: a study of Communal Relations* (Tokyo, 1993) cited in: A.J.Kamra, *The Prolonged Partition & Its Pogroms: testimonies on Violence against Hindus in East Bengal 1946-64*, New Delhi, 2000.

**Assam Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC) Executive Meeting,  
then APCC president Anjan Dutta had said:**

“We will take up the unresolved issue of citizenship for the Bengali Hindus, Buddhists, Christians and people of other minority communities who came to Assam after being subjected to inhuman torture post the partition of India.” He added that these people were citizens of undivided India and they were forced to flee their own homes for saving their lives after being subjected to atrocities on the ground of religion. The APCC urges the Centre to grant citizenship to all such people, taking into consideration historical reality and the humanitarian aspect.<sup>24</sup>

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**Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee meeting refugees in a camp in Nadia District**

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24. Assam: Congress seeks citizenship for Hindu Bengalis, Buddhists who migrated from Bangladesh

Read more at: [//economictimes.indiatimes.com/articleshow/47514296.cms?from=mdr&utm\\_source=contentofinterest&utm\\_medium=text&utm\\_campaign=cppst](http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/articleshow/47514296.cms?from=mdr&utm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=cppst)

# Testimonies of Refugees

The Nehru-Liaquat Pact of April 1950 failed to safeguard minorities in Pakistan and they continued to be forced to leave their home and hearth. Abandoning their precious pieces of land and their familiar surroundings they came away away, de-rooted, bedraggled, completely denuded to India in order to survive with a modicum of dignity.

Dr Syama Prasad Mookerjee's description of these people that he articulated in Parliament continues to be the most heart rending and distressing, he told the House, "I have seen all classes and conditions of people, men, women, and children, many of whom never knew what poverty and want were. But today they are homeless; they are hopeless. Their physical suffering was great. But what struck me as most ominous and most distressing was the moral torture through which millions of people have passed..."<sup>25</sup> The torture and discrimination of minorities in Pakistan continued and continues. The steady stream has now been reduced to a trickle but perhaps that is because the minority population in Pakistan, erstwhile East Pakistan and later in Bangladesh has continued to deplete and disappear. These people who were uprooted over a period of about seven decades, were compelled to leave their homes and land of ancestors and to seek refuge in India and live an invisible life. The CAA has now made it possible for them regain certainty, stability, recognition and dignity. They call India their land, their motherland, they now heave a sigh of relief for they see for themselves finally the possibilities of an existence that is recognised and empowered.

Oral history and testimonies have a definitive place in the understanding, dissemination of narratives. The plight of refugees who have fled Pakistan is a genre in itself. It pushes us out of our comfort zone, it exposes the many false narratives, it counters the deep rooted animosity that certain political and intellectual group demonstrates against the granting of Indian citizenship to these hapless, people. Those who oppose CAA are those who have not lived through the trauma of forced dislocation. Those who politicise it – like the Congress, Communist parties – are deliberately ignoring their past positions. They betray their positions made in the past and indulge in fear-mongering and peddling untruths. But these contrived attempts at disseminating falsehood is falling through. Parties like the Trinamool Congress in West Bengal are in effect insulting the struggle and memories of lakhs of Bengali Hindu refugees who were forced to take shelter in West Bengal because their lives and spaces

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25. *The Bengal Situation – Text of Speech by Dr Syama Prasad Mookerjee in Parliament on 7th August, 1950, Delhi: The All India Refugee Association, 1950.*

had turned into living hell-holes. The refugees tell their own tale, the tale and excruciating experience of having being evicted is best heard from them.

The anguish of the Hindu refugees living at MajnukaTila, situated near Kashmiri Gate and Adarsh Nagar, near Majlis Park Metro Station in the northern part of New Delhi can be heard and gauged from their own words. People living in these camps faced religious and social persecution in Pakistan. They were compelled to leave. "It is better to commit suicide by throwing ourselves in front of a truck rather than live a life of persecution in Pakistan," exclaimed Gopi who had migrated from near Karachi.

The compilation in this booklet is of refugees who had migrated to India from the Sindh Province of Pakistan. Only a few among them agreed to share the names of their districts in Sindh. They were either too traumatised or continued to be apprehensive. However, their exuberance has started finding public expression, they believe that the enactment of the Citizenship Amendment Act, 2019 has liberated them and handed them back their lost dignity and honour. They were euphoric and were seen celebrating, the day the CAA was passed by Parliament.

For the Hindu refugees from Pakistan and Afghanistan camping in Delhi, the passing of the CAB and its enactment into CAA is a festival more colourful than Diwali and Holi. They had passed the worst, a new beginning beckoned them.

S.No.	Name	From
1.	Radhe	Sindh
2.	Sitaram and Gomti	Sindh
3.	Prem	Sukkur district, Sindh
4.	Gyandas	Sindh
5.	Sukhnand	Sindh
6.	Mohan & Mangal	Sindh
7.	Sacha Prahlad	Sindh
8.	Ravi Master	Sindh
9.	Ramchandra	District Tando Allahyar, Sindh
10.	Nehrulal	Sindh
11.	Meera Devi	Sindh
12.	Kanji Thakur	District Hyderabad, Sindh

26

26. Above is the table of the refugees whom we interviewed. A total of 20 people were interviewed during our visit to both the camps including the respective Pradhans/Heads of both the camps.



## **1. Radhe**



Radhe, from Sindh in Pakistan, has been living in a refugee camp in North Delhi, for the past seven years. He told us how Hindus in Pakistan are seen as second class citizens and treated like slaves. He narrated how the judicial system is biased against Hindus and other religious minorities whose voices are hardly ever heard by the Courts in Pakistan. Forced conversions, eve-teasing of women on their way to temples were routine. Opportunities for education and employment for minorities are practically non-existent. Now that they had finally managed to come to India, how did he feel, Radhe's face lightened up, "Our country and our soil always remain ours and no one can separate the two from each other. Though I came here from Pakistan but a Hindu naturally belongs to India. Now I will finally be able to live here with dignity." Radhe owns a small shop in the refugee camp and sells mobile phone covers and other accessories. Adapting himself to technology PhonePe and PayTM apps in the age of Digital India, he firmly believes that life in India is any day better than living a life without dignity in Pakistan. Radhe appeared confident about his future in India and profusely expressed his gratitude to Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Shri Amit Shah for CAA, "Our future is now going to be safe and secure here", he gushed with tears streaming down his smiling eyes.

## **2. Sitaram and Gomti**



Sitaram and Gomti had migrated to India in 2013 with their family of eight. "In Pakistan, we were never treated as Pakistanis, we were never seen as citizens of Pakistan, we were disrespected for being Hindus, we were always treated as agents of India, fifth columnists who are here to work against the country", Sitaram recalled. "We were always hated in Pakistan for being Hindus, we faced persecution and were repeatedly reminded that we were 'Kafirs', who had no place of equality in Pakistani society. It was a daily state of mental siege and torture. Our children faced discrimination in school for being Hindu." Religious persecution was very common Sitaram lamented, demolishing temples, hurling slurs at Hindus and their modes and methods of worship, is common in Pakistan. "India's Prime Minister Modi has saved and protected the Hindus of Pakistan and has salvaged their Dharma," he felt.

Sitaram's wife Gomti recalled how their children were prevented from studying or applying for jobs. She narrated how their life was turned into

hell, “it was a continuous nightmare. We were forced to watch the slaughter of cows, our cows were slaughtered before us, we could not bear the pain and oppression and decided to come away to Bharat, our actual motherland.” “Are you happy in these camps?” we asked her, “we can live in poverty but cannot survive in the midst of atrocities constantly faced with the terror of being dishonoured”, she replied. To those who are opposing CAA, Gomti’s answer was simple and stark, “we have faced a lot of torture and have undergone great pain that’s why we came to our motherland. We are at last being given a life of dignity, don’t oppose it.”

### **3. Prem**



Prem, a native of district Sukkur in Sindh lives in the Majnuka Tila refugee camp along with his 12 member family. Prem is blind and when told that the Modi Government has granted citizenship rights to the Hindu refugees, he beamed with joy and radiated a sense of relief. Sitting in the open in a huddle, braving the Delhi winter, Prem told us how Hindus are treated as untouchables in Pakistan. “If we try even as much as being nice and playful with the children of Muslims, people start hurling abuses at us, abduction of daughters and daughter-in-laws of Hindu families is a common practice. Our children get death threats every day.” Unable to bear this trauma, this uncertainty and constant heaping of abuse, Prem and his family finally migrated to India. “I had to lie to government authorities and their overlords, we told them that we are going to India on a pilgrimage. Had they known that we are leaving Pakistan forever, they would have prevented us from coming away and would have forced us to convert to Islam. “You left your home and have come away here, don’t you think of your home anymore?” we asked him, Prem movingly replied, “Even a bird doesn’t leave her nest and here we have left our home. It was a very tough decision but we had no other option. At least now we can call ourselves Indians with pride. We will never forget Narendra Modi Ji’s favour for people like us.”

### **4. Gyandas**



Trudging through the refugee camp, we reached Gyandas’s hut. Gyandas who had left Pakistan in 2013 along with his family has now become well-known across India. On the day the Citizenship Amendment Bill was passed in the Rajya Sabha, Gyandas was blessed with a daughter and, overwhelmed with

emotions, he named her 'Nagrikta' (Citizenship) in tribute and gratefulness to PM Narendra Modi's historic move to grant citizenship. Gyandas will now at last officially become a citizen of India. The biggest issue before him was citizenship and now "After getting citizenship, our necessities will automatically be fulfilled", he beamed, "our children will now have access to schools, healthcare, we will now have opportunities for employment and more possibilities, our lives will now be stable, and we have a future to look forward to now", Gyandas said. What message would he like to give those who are protesting against the CAA? "What will they gain by protesting against this? If we poor people are getting some rights from the government then why are you, who are our brothers and sisters protesting against it? Open your eyes, look at us, we are Indians. We are the sufferers."

### **5. Sukhnand**



Many heart rending tales of torture, discrimination, oppression of minorities in Pakistan are heard in these camps. Not all of them can be recorded, not all of them want to speak, some move away on seeing us, and some silently beckon us to move on. We finally met Sukhnand, the head of refugee camp in the area. The other refugees had nominated Sukhnand to lead them and push for improving their lives. The Majnu Ka Tila refugee camp has some 135 families living in it. Facing years of persecution, Sukhnand with his family and a group of 483 Hindus came away to India from Sindh. He recalled how in 2011 around 150 Hindus had been forced to leave Pakistan for India. There has been a continuous flow of Hindus from Pakistan, very few must be left now, he rued. The tale of woe was the same, forced conversion, threat to families, especially young female members, forced to live and follow customs of the majority, hurling abuses at Hindus for their faith and methods of worship and even creating hurdles for Hindus performing the last rites of their near and dear ones. "We are constantly told to leave Pakistan, on the one hand they try and prevent us from leaving and force us to convert, on the other hand they keep telling us, 'Pakistan is not for you...go away, you are spies, you are traitors, you are on the pay roll of India, we will crush you, we will convert you...' Hindu children are forced to recite the Kalma, Hindu girls who go to school always risk being kidnapped and converted, "there is always the fear that 14-15 years old Hindu girls will be abducted by Muslim boys, forced to convert and get married...Authorities and officials in Pakistan are not concerned with our fate. From the Courts to the Panchayats, everyone turns a deaf ear to our plight, to the Hindu minority, on top of it the Hindus have no



leaders in Pakistan who can speak for them.” For Sukhnand the passing of the CAA was an occasion more colourful than Holi and Diwali! “Our children will now be able to receive education, get jobs in future, we don’t have to live in fear and uncertainty, they can aspire to become doctors, engineers, can get enrolled in the police and the army (fauj) to serve the nation.” For those who are protesting against the CAA Sukhnand’s answer was simple, “Muslims have 52 nations that have Islam as state religion. For Hindus only Hindustan is left. We are not saying that uproot the Muslims living here and replace them with us. All we are saying is don’t oppose if we, the neglected and oppressed ones, are getting something. We have been persecuted. Don’t hate us but accept us with an open heart. We are only hungry for some love and respect.” Sukhnand also took us to Lakshmi who had come away to India from Sindh in 2011. Tears rolled down Lakshmi’s cheeks when she narrated the daily ordeals of Hindu women in Pakistan. Constant insecurity, abductions, forcible conversion, teasing, molestation. “They are treated worse than animals,” she told us...I want to put all of that behind me, we want to make a fresh start, this nagrikta kanoon (citizenship law) gives us that scope at last.”

## **6. Mohan & Mangal**



*Mangal*

We met Mohan, who was forced to come away from Sindh, he did not divulge his district. Mohan’s family of nine had to come away under similar conditions, forced conversion, daily discrimination and abuses, lack of opportunities for minorities. After CAA, Mohan is at peace, he has hope, he looks forward to a life of dignity, he can never think of returning to Pakistan, it was a nightmarish existence. Mangal’s family of ten members migrated from Sindh under similar circumstances. “My children were forced to study the Quran, they were being taught the concept of jihad, daily life had become unbearable,” Mangal lamented. We are landless peasants, after a whole day’s back breaking work in the fields, we were not given our wages, and if got them, they were snatched away by the local Muslims strongmen, the police rarely intervened, we were constantly told to convert for a better life, our women and girls were stalked...How can one continue living in these circumstances?” he countered. To those who were protesting against CAA, Mangal retorted, “Sahab, can they go and live our lives in Pakistan...?”



## **7. Sacha Prahlad**

Later in the day, as we moved about the camp, we met Sacha Prahlad. Sacha Prahlad's family is among a batch of four families who came away to India from Sindh. On CAA, he became emotional, we had to take a decision, we could either remain here with our never ending ordeals, be suppressed and eke out a miserable existence or come away to India. We came away and now Modi Sarkar has brought an end to our ordeal and filled our lives with happiness. We will be respected and will have a place to live. We will now become Indian Citizens." We met a number of refugees who spoke to us on the condition of anonymity, many others who did not speak, they did not want to be clicked, they were worried for the safety of their relatives left behind in Pakistan, they would face persecution and be forced to convert they told us.

## **8. Ravi Master**



Ravi, aka Ravi Master, was a teacher in Sindh, Pakistan. He is fluent in English, works as a teacher in the camp and hopes that soon the Hindu refugees would get their citizenship certificate and his children will be able to study and bring about a change in their lives. In Pakistan Ravi had translated Bhagavad Gita and many other Hindu scriptures into Urdu.

Like a teacher, Ravi Master reminds those who oppose CAA, "they should realize that they [refugees] have their roots in India and are brothers and sisters of fellow Indians. If we are getting our dues after several years, then what is the basis of your protests?" His immediate aim now is to set up a small business, he is happy, is looking forward to a future full of possibilities. This was denied to him and his family in Pakistan.

## **9. Ramchandra**



We met Ramchandra at the Adarsh Nagar refugee camp. Ramchandra, a labourer had migrated from Tando Allahyar district in Sindh with his five children. His wife continues to remain in Pakistan, "I am collecting sufficient money to bring her away", he told us. Living in a continuous state of uncertainty and insecurity, "In Pakistan, our girls and womenfolk would be regularly abducted from our colonies, the police and the courts did not listen to us, we have no resources to fight cases and manage the police."

## **10. Nehrulal**



Nehru Lal, is the head of the Adarsh Nagar camp. He had escaped to India in 2013 with a group of 480 other people. He has two brothers and his two daughters are still in Pakistan and he is making arrangement to bring them to India soon.

“What was the reason for him to leave Pakistan?” Nehrulal quoted statistics on Hindu minorities in Pakistan, “They used to be 23% at the time of partition, they have now been reduced to 3%, there was no greater reason than this. Where did they go, did they die, or were they swallowed up by the earth? No one questions this, no one even talks about this. Hindus are not even served with tea in the hotels and restaurants of Pakistan. The owners of the restaurants tell us to pick up the cups, wash them ourselves only then tea will be served to us. Not only this, we are also compelled to wash the utensil by ourselves after having meals in those hotels. No one can even think of the pathetic life that we had been living there due to oppression.” Nehrulal narrated an incident where three Hindu girls were abducted in Karachi. “We organised mass protests against this abduction and gathered in large numbers, but to no avail. In the end, those three girls were brought to the Court in burkhas so that we could not recognise them and they were forced to publicly accept Islam. This was done to fool the Court. We could have recognised our girls if they had removed the burkhas in front of us in the Court.”

“What do you want to say to those people who are opposing CAA and are demanding that Muslims of Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan must also be given citizenship?” “Go invite them and you will see another Pakistan within ten years, here”, Nehrulal retorted. “Actually, all those politicians who are opposing this Law are just trying to appease the voters of one particular community”, he told us. “Many refugees like you will get citizenship of India now. Where do you see yourselves in the future?” “Now there is infinite hope and a future for us in India, he replied, “There was darkness and uncertainty in Pakistan, after getting citizenship our children will study and get jobs. Whereas there was no hope like this in Pakistan. Pakistan is a hopeless country. We will work hard and shape a new existence here in India, our motherland. The Modi Sarkar have given us this much, we are sure it will now empower us further.”

## **11. Meera Devi**

Meera Devi bid a goodbye to Pakistan and migrated to India along with her 9 family members in 2014. Before we could even start talking to her she began narrating the tales of brutal behaviour of Sindhi Muslims towards the minorities. “The Muslim zamindars in Pakistan don’t even pay us wages after making us do all the hard work on their farms. We were only paid Rs. 20 for work which is worth Rs. 100.” Meera Devi’s husband works as a carpenter here in India and earns Rs. 300 – Rs. 400 per day.” “We have never known how it is to celebrate our festivals like Holi and Diwali. We were not allowed to celebrate our festivals and even the streets were deliberately kept dull and dark during Hindu festivals. Everything used to be deserted. There was a constant fear among Hindu children of being bullied and beaten in school, a constant uncertainty lurked, and they were unsure whether they would return home after school. Pakistani Muslims even abducted my cousin sister and we don’t know her whereabouts to this day. Incidents like these made our lives very painful, we decided to leave Pakistan forever. A half-baked bread in India tastes any day better than a fully baked one in Pakistan because of the feeling of peace, security and comfort here...If anyone after God has listened to our cries, then that person is our Prime Minister Narendra Modi. He is an incarnation of God. We thank him from the bottom of our heart. We hope that we will now be able to get to live a life of dignity”, she signed off.

## **12. Kanji Thakur**



The mud path took us to Kanji Thakur’s house, who came to India from Hyderabad in Sindh. On entering Kanji’s house, we couldn’t help but notice the Tulsi plant growing in the middle of the house unencumbered and in perfect security. Kanji greeted us and we introduced ourselves. He told us that he had come away with a group of 28 persons from Pakistan. A Muslim landlord had usurped his land in Pakistan, it had pushed him to the brink, and he had to wander for his subsistence. A number of incidents forced him to leave Pakistan, but there was one that proved to be the proverbial last straw. “After my land was forcefully snatched away, I had bought a Maruti Omni car from my life savings”, Kanji remembered, “and used to drive it as a taxi and run my house on my earning from it. This had enraged the Muslim landlords, they felt that they had not been able to crush me. One day while I was returning home after dropping off the last passenger for the day, I was accosted by masked men who blocked

my way. They were armed and threatened me. I knew they wanted my car. But I did not intend to let go of my hard earned savings. I did not stop my car and ran for my life. I decided leave with my entire family.” Kanji showed us a picture of him with the car and told us how he was eventually forced to sell off his car. “Now we have come to Bharat, and this is our motherland. We don’t want to go anywhere. We have returned stumbling and this is our home now.” he adds. The stories Kanji narrates are similar and equally disturbing, these are stories no human right activists will tell you, the kidnapping and forcible marriage of Hindu girls, their conversion, harassment of Hindus during festivals and sacred days, the daily abuses and invectives hurled at them publicly, but now all that he has left behind, a dark dream, the painful memories are gradually receding because of the CAA. “We have got our freedom through Narendra Modi and Amit Shah. We are indebted to this government not only for this life but for the next 7 lives as well,” Kanji said exuberantly. His grandson Jagdev, sauntered in, “see, look at this toddler’s drawings”, he tells us, see how circumstances can never overwhelm inherent talent. In India we will, now, each one of us, be able to discover our talent, us and our future generations, we shall not be suppressed anymore, we are free, we are liberated...”



# Hindu Refugee Camp in Adarsh Nagar, New Delhi





# Hindu Refugee Camp in Majnu ka Tila, New Delhi



## **CAA- an opportunity to live a dignified life in India**



This Amendment Act will provide minorities facing religious persecution (in Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan) an opportunity to live a dignified life in India.

These minorities facing injustice from long time have received justice today through the efforts of Modi Government.

- **Shri J.P. Nadda**, *Working President of Bharatiya Janata Party, 11 December, 2019 in Rajya Sabha*

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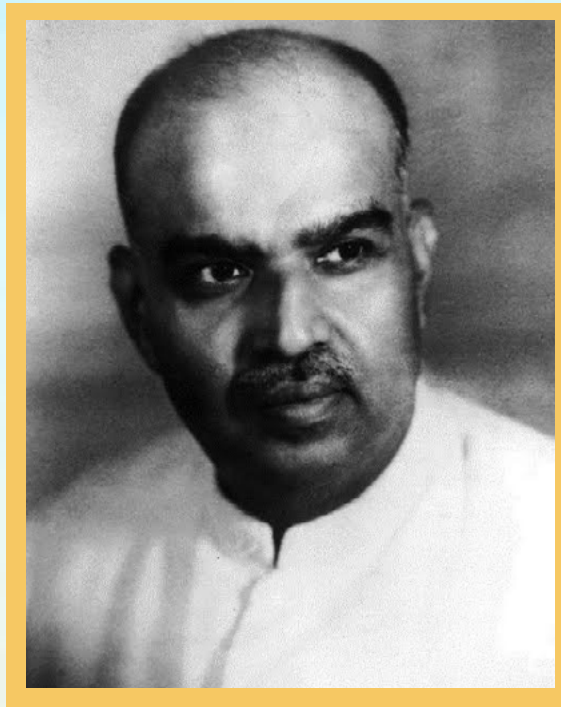
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Islamic State is Pakistan's creed and a planned extermination of Hindus and Sikhs and expropriation of their properties constitute its settled policy. As a result of this policy, life for the minorities in Pakistan has become nasty, brutish and short. Let us not be forgetful of the lessons of history. We will do so at our own peril. I am not talking of by-gone times, but if anyone analyses the course of events in Pakistan since creation, it will be manifest that there is no honourable place for Hindus within that State. The problem is not communal. It is essentially political.

**-Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee**

in Parliament on his resignation as Minister of Industry and Supply,  
19th April, 1950

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