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Refugees in West Bengal: A Study of the  
Growth and Distribution of Refugee  
Settlements Within the CMD

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The present paper is intended to form a part of my thesis entitled "Study of the nature of integration of refugee settlements in the Calcutta Metropolitan District" for the Ph.D. of the Calcutta University. This research work has been possible due to all facilities provided by the Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Calcutta, and the scholarship granted by the Indian Council of Social Science Research, New Delhi. I am grateful to Prof. Sunil Kumar Munsii and Prof. Ashok Sen for their continuous guidance, sympathetic help and most valuable ideas and suggestions which deeply enriched my thoughts and deliberations. They have been kind enough to spare their time in going through the draft report and suggest suitable changes wherever necessary. Dr. Keya Dasgupta of the Centre helped me immensely in tiding over many technical questions in handling this problem.

I am thankful to the officers of the West Bengal State Assembly Library and the State Refugee, Relief and Rehabilitation Directorate for giving me the required facilities to consult official records and to collect data which have been extensively used in this paper to arrive at reasonable conclusions and valid observations. I shall be failing in my duty if I do not acknowledge with due respect the encouragement and official support I received from Shri S.P. Dey, I.A.S., Commissioner and Secretary, West Bengal State R.R. Department, who evinced keen interest in my research work.

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REFUGEES IN WEST BENGAL : A STUDY OF THE GROWTH  
AND DISTRIBUTION OF REFUGEE SETTLEMENTS  
WITHIN THE CMD

Pranati Chaudhuri\*

INTRODUCTION :

The present century has experienced a number of cases of mass migrations of people from one country to another due mainly to political causes. These migrant refugees left their homes under stress of force majeure and sought hospitality of other states. These always had extremely serious socio-economic implications particularly for the country where the refugees migrated and settled down permanently as in a new home. The problems presented by large-scale refugee movements vary widely from country to country. What is, however, common is the resultant transformation of the cultural landscape with a suddenness uncommon in normal times.

In 1921, the League of Nations set up a High Commission for Refugees which led to the formation of many more international organisations in subsequent years for the welfare of refugees in different parts of the world. The most important of these organisations are mentioned below :

1. High Commission for Refugee - 1921
2. The Nansen International Office - 1930
3. High Commissioner for Refugee from Germany - 1933
4. Inter-Governmental Committee on Refugees - 1938
5. High Commission for Refugees - 1939

Set up by the  
League of  
Nations

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1. Britain and World Refugee Problems - Reference Division, Central Office of Information. London, December, 1959, p.24.

REFUGEE SETTLEMENTS  
WITHIN  
CALCUTTA  
METROPOLITAN DISTRICT

Types Of Refugee Colonies

Government Sponsored ○

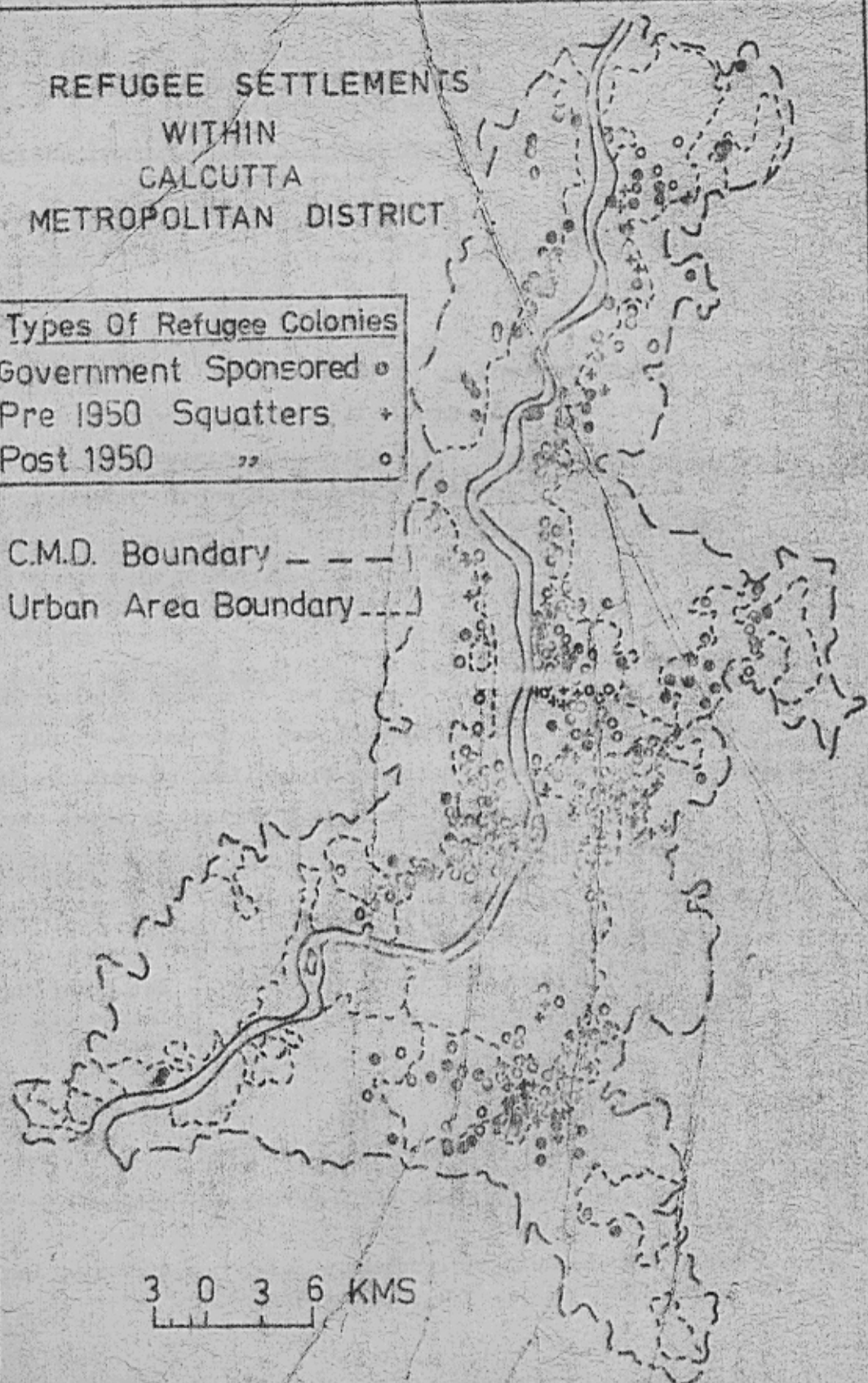
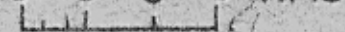
Pre 1950 Squatters +

Post 1950 " ○

C.M.D. Boundary - - - -

Urban Area Boundary - - - -

3 0 3 6 KMS



/Nations

6. United/Relief and Rehabilitation Agency (UNRRA) - 1943
7. International Refugee Organisation (IRO) - 1948
8. United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) - 1949
9. United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) - 1949
10. United Nations Korean Reconstruction Agency (UNKRA) - 1950
11. Inter-Governmental Committee for European Migration - 1954

Set up by  
the United  
Nations  
Organisation

Since early 1930's, movements of people from one part of the world to another due to various reasons - political, social and economic, have been a recurrent phenomenon. There have been forced movements mostly due to war or tyranny. Mass migrations of people have taken place to escape religious or political persecution, extermination and fear of their recurrence. Even forced transfer and exchange of ethnic groups is recorded in history. Wars have seen exchanges of population as repatriation movement resulting in loss of citizenship to the refugees.

On 5th December, 1958, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution urging national Governments to observe a World Refugee Year (WRY) in 1959 as a practical means of focussing interest on the World Refugee Problems, inviting contributions and encouraging remedial action. Since then research work covering various socio-economic aspects of the refugee problem on a global scale has been undertaken by research organisations with a view to finding out permanent solutions to the chronic malady affecting the lives and properties of millions of people all over the world.

Refugees may be identified as persons who have left their homeland due to some religious or political reasons, have lost their citizenship and have sought shelter in a neighbouring country. The literature on the subject has defined 'refugees' in many ways, the principal criterion being the same. According to international law two conditions should exist for identifying a person as a refugee,<sup>2</sup> e.g.

- a) Persons or categories of persons qualifying for refugee status must have left the territory of the state of which they were nationals. This is true for the refugees in India also.
- b) The events which are the root cause of a man's becoming a refugee derive from the relations between the state and its nationals. So, victims of natural disasters are excluded.

The refugees who came to India after independence can be grouped into two broad categories :-

- i) Those who migrated from East Pakistan to West Bengal.
- ii) Those who migrated from West Pakistan to Punjab and the adjoining States.

#### Refugee Influx in India :

India gained her independence in 1947 not without making a heavy sacrifice in men and materials. The country had to be partitioned creating a new sovereign State, vis., Pakistan geographically located at the eastern and western ends of India. An unfortunate and undesirable situation which developed in the new country in post-partition period forced thousands of the minority community to leave their hearth and home and to come over to the Indian side of the border for fear of communal oppression and persecution.

2. Saksena, R.N. - Refugees : A Study in Changing Attitudes, Asia Publishing House, 1961, p.116.

The refugees who had to face this hardship were drawn from various levels of life and spheres of activity. They came over to India to explore the possibility of a secure future in this country. There were numerous problems, material and psychological, which came in the way of their fully and finally settling down in India. There was also a reverse movement of Muslims who crossed the borders and went to the other side.

About 35 lakhs Hindus had come from East Pakistan to West Bengal from the time of the Partition till January 1951. After the Prime Ministers' Agreement of April, 1950, (Delhi Pact) about 12 lakhs went back to their homes in East Pakistan. It is not possible to say how many of these 12 lakh Hindus returned to West Bengal, again since 1st February, 1951. About 11 lakhs Muslims migrated from West Bengal to East Pakistan since the disturbances in February, 1950, upto the end of January, 1951. Of them, about 7.5 lakhs Muslims returned to their homes in West Bengal during the same period.<sup>3</sup> In those years the inflow of the Hindus from East Pakistan to West Bengal was more in number than the outflow of the Muslims from West Bengal. Very meagre information is available regarding the number of outgoing Muslims. On the whole, the net inflow of refugees to West Bengal is estimated at about 6 million upto 1973.

Similar migratory flows and transfers of population occurred during the same period in the north-western states of India. It is estimated that about 5.5 million non-muslims later migrated from Sind to India.

Refugees from East Pakistan migrated to West Bengal in waves starting from 15th August, 1947, till the end of 1971. Scanty records

3. Dr. B.C. Roy, 17th April, 1951, Third Session, Assembly Proceedings Vol.III - No.3, p.383.



in the Assembly Proceedings show that the refugees came sometimes in huge numbers and sometimes in few groups. But the refugees from West Pakistan crossed the border en masse in 1947-48 and at that time itself there was almost a complete transfer of population. The influx, therefore, did not continue in the later years as in the case of West Bengal.

The Assembly Proceedings record repeated complaints that while the refugees from West Pakistan received adequate compensation, the refugees from East Pakistan did not get this benefit. It led to more suffering for them.

Muslims from East Punjab went away leaving in many cases vast properties technically known as 'evacuee' property which were later occupied by the incoming refugees. This aided the settlement process of the refugees in East Punjab and adjoining states. In West Bengal although 7 lakhs Muslims had left, 5 lakhs, came back for whom provision of "evacuee property" did not apply. Due to the availability of vast tracts of land in Punjab, Delhi, Haryana and adjoining areas, the refugees from West Pakistan settled conveniently by establishing a number of new colonies. In the east the refugees entered into the already crowded state of West Bengal where accommodation for such a huge number of people was quite difficult to provide. As a result the refugees from East Pakistan had to face many more problems of settlement compared to the refugees from West Pakistan.

The influx of refugees in huge numbers created unprecedented social, economic and cultural problems for India. Official measures were taken for the rehabilitation of the refugees. The present paper is an attempt to look into the nature and process of refugee absorption in this country particularly in terms of the transformation

of the cultural landscape. It will, however, be confined to the study of the patterns of entry and dispersal of East Bengal refugees within the Calcutta Metropolitan District.

AREAS OF REFUGEE SETTLEMENTS :

The settlements or the colonies which have become embedded in the mosaic of the state of West Bengal by the displaced person of East Pakistan, are known as 'refugee settlements'. These settlements are not genetic components of the state but are the end-products of the play of external forces leading to the migratory flows which have been pouring into West Bengal for about 35 years.

In order to bring out the characteristic features of these settlements within the Calcutta Metropolitan District, it is necessary to have a general background of the situation prevailing in the whole of West Bengal. While highlighting the facts about the refugee settlements within the Calcutta Metropolitan District, the chronological as well as the general pattern of distribution of the refugee settlements and the refugees in West Bengal will be dealt with to provide a clearer understanding of what was happening within the bounds of the **MD**.

It is, first of all, necessary to describe in this context the characteristic features of a metropolitan area. "A Metropolitan area consists of two or more urban centres having independent local Governments together with the adjoining semi-urban areas and those non-urban areas which will be affected by the expansion of the urban centres in question within the foreseeable future".<sup>4</sup> This definition

4. Planning For Urban and Regional Development in Asia and the Far East - Seminar on Planning for Urban and Regional Development including Metropolitan Areas, New Towns and Land Policies at Nagoya, Japan, 10th-20th October, 1966, United Nations, New York, 1971, p.79.

points out the various components of a metropolitan area. These components coincide with those of the Calcutta Metropolitan District and therefore, it can be stated that this paper is concerned with the characteristics of identifiable refugee settlements within the Calcutta metropolitan area demarcated as the CMD for planning purposes.

The Calcutta city core means the Calcutta Corporation Area with an area of 36.92 sq. miles or 104 sq.km. The Calcutta Metropolitan Area or District, on the other hand, is an area of 540 sq. miles or 1450 sq.km. Calcutta Metropolitan District includes Calcutta Corporation and some portions of the districts of 24 Parganas, Howrah, Hooghly and a small portion of the district of Nadia in the north. In all, there are 34 municipalities and 37 non-municipal urban units within the C.M.D. Along with these there are 344 rural mouzas on the East Bank and 200 mouzas on the West Bank. These are distributed among thirty police stations lying on both the banks of the Hooghly river.

#### CONCENTRATION OF REFUGEES IN WEST BENGAL :

Table 1 (all tables given as appendices) shows the actual concentration of refugee population in West Bengal and in the C.M.D. It is noteworthy that almost a quarter of the total urban population of West Bengal are refugee migrants. In the same table the share of refugee population in the total population of the Calcutta Metropolitan District has been indicated. The concentration pattern of refugees in the C.M.D. will be discussed later. The same Table indicates that out of the total population of West Bengal 13.54% is constituted by the refugees.

It is of interest to note that while the R.R. Department tried to focus the refugee problem by quoting from time to time the

figures of refugee population in different districts, the West Bengal Assembly Proceedings dealt with the subject by referring to the number of refugee colonies of different types located in various districts along with the number of families residing therein. In the subsequent discussions both these types of data will be suitably utilized to bring out the magnitude of the refugee concentration in West Bengal.

The Refugee Rehabilitation Department worked out a detailed breakdown of refugee population, district and sub-divisionwise as in December, 1973. It is found from the estimate that the total refugee population in West Bengal would be around 6 million upto 1973. In Table 2 sub-divisional concentration of the refugees within the districts have been omitted but the concentration in districts as a whole have been presented.

If the distribution of refugees in all the districts is considered, it appears that the highest concentration is in the district of 24 Parganas (27.5%) followed by Nadia (25.1%), Calcutta (15%), Cooch Behar (7.3%), West Dinajpur (4.8%), Jalpaiguri (4.1%), Burdwan (4.0%), Hooghly (2.6%), Howrah (2.4%), Murshidabad (2.3%), Maldah (2.2%). About 68% of the refugees are concentrated in the three districts of 24 Parganas, Nadia and Calcutta. The rest of the 32% of the refugees are distributed in the other 13 districts of West Bengal, more or less evenly. The high concentration of refugees in those three districts can be explained to some extent by the fact that from the very beginning the influx of refugees poured into those areas located in and around the Calcutta Metropolitan District. Supported by loans advanced by Government huts were built in different colonies in 24 Parganas, Jalpaiguri, Murshidabad, Nadia and other places in 1949-50.<sup>5</sup> Townships

5. Bidhan Chandra Roy, 28th February, 1950, Second Session (September), Assembly Proceedings, Vol. II, No. 1, pp. 79-80.

were established by the Government of India at Fulia (Nadia District) and Kanchrapara for middle class population; <sup>6</sup> 443 families of East Bengal refugees belonging mainly to agricultural class, also settled themselves in 1948 in Char Jadubati near Kanchrapara. <sup>7</sup> Rehabilitation of refugees was attempted in all districts of West Bengal. It proceeded quicker in those districts where acquisition was possible earlier and rehabilitation was not stayed on account of injunction orders issued by courts.

Total number of refugee families from East Pakistan rehabilitated in the different districts of West Bengal till the end of February, 1953, was 48, 864. It is a fact that in the process of rehabilitation concentration of refugees had occurred in border districts such as 24 Parganas and Nadia leaving aside the districts in the interior. <sup>8</sup>

All the above statements confirm that within West Bengal the concentration of refugees had been higher in the border districts and in Calcutta where urban facilities constituted the main pull. Calcutta being the nerve centre of West Bengal and a metropolis, attracted quite a large number of refugees in its urban fringes. In 1973 about 9,00,000 refugees were inhabiting the Calcutta District and this entire population was urban by nature.

Refugee population figures, as given by the Refugee Relief and Rehabilitation Department in a report published in February, 1974 (shown

6. Speaker, 8th February, 1951, Third Session (Budget), Assembly Proceedings, Vol.III, No.1, p.2.
7. B.C. Roy, 8th March, 1951, Third Session, Assembly Proceedings, Vol.II, No.2, p.191.
8. Renuka Roy, 27th April, 1953, Seventh Session, (Budget), Assembly Proceedings, Vol.VII, No.3, p.243.

in Table 2 of the Appendix), differ largely from those given in 1971 Census described as 'People born in Pakistan'. To illustrate this difference, two sets of figures in respect of four selected districts are quoted below. For the purpose of this paper, however, the R.R. Department figures have been used without trying to resolve the difference between them and the figures supplied by the Census.

Districts	Census-1971	R.R. Report-1973
Calcutta	2,87,000	9,00,000
24 Parganas	5,74,000	8,95,950
Howrah	42,000	1,01,305
Hooghly	93,000	1,04,219

In the adjoining districts of Calcutta, viz., 24 Parganas, Howrah and Hooghly, the concentration of refugees is higher in the urban areas as revealed from the percentage shares, viz., 54.3%, 70% and 65.6% respectively (shown in Table 2 of the Appendix). In these areas even within the rural limits the percentage of non-agriculturists is higher than that of agriculturists. This is likely to be a result of the urban influence of the metropolis. In other districts concentration of refugees is higher in the rural areas, i. viz., Nadia district - 75% in rural areas, Cooch Behar 91.6%, West Dinajpur 87%, Jalpaiguri 85%, Burdwan 69.3%, Maldah 80%. One reason for such variations among the districts may be that in the latter districts the amount of waste and cultivable land was more easily available compared to the districts of 24 Parganas, Howrah and Hooghly.

The Assembly Proceedings of early '50s indicate that the concentration of refugees was the highest in the district of Nadia where the first infiltration started from Khulna and Bagerhat.<sup>9</sup> In the northern districts of West Bengal forests were cleared by the refugees to accommodate themselves within the limited space available to them. In a quick process the waste and forested lands along with the vacant cultivable lands were also occupied by the refugees mostly illegally. After few years when the availability of primary resources (i.e. land) became uncertain, the pressure on secondary and tertiary sectors increased in Calcutta and in the adjacent districts. Thus, it is found from Table 2 that even in some districts where agriculture had been predominant viz., Cooch Behar, West Dinajpur, Bankura and Burdwan, the proportion of rural non-agriculturists was quite high. Most of the refugees sought shelter in the urban areas. So, while the cities and towns like Krishnagar, Calcutta, Berhampore and Jalpaiguri were invaded by a large number of refugees, the rural areas were not equally invaded.<sup>10</sup> During 1956-57 in the colonies like Thakur Colony (Hooghly District), Dhubulia (Nadia District), etc., about 10,000 refugees were living. Agriculturist refugees settled in Maheswaripur and Sitarampur colonies in Midnapur District (1955). In 1955 there were 294 Government Refugee Rehabilitation Colonies in West Bengal. Districtwise distribution of such colonies was as given in the next page.<sup>11</sup>

In Midnapur, Bankura, Cooch Behar, West Dinajpur, Maldah, Darjeeling, Birbhum and Burdwan the concentration of refugees was less

9. Sibnath Banerjee 16th February, 1950, First Session, Assembly Proceedings, Vol.II, No.1, p.28.
10. B.C. Roy, 7th February, 1950, First Session, Assembly Proceedings, Vol.I, No.1, pp.71-74.
11. Renuka Roy, 5th September, 1955, Twelfth Session, Assembly Proceedings, Vol.XII, No.2, pp.286-288.

Districts	No. of Colonies	Districts	No. of Colonies
1. 24 Parganas	163	8. Cooch Behar	6
2. Nadia	30	9. West Dinajpur	2
3. Howrah	11	10. Maldah	5
4. Midnapur	8	11. Murshidabad	18
5. Bankura	1	12. Birbhum	7
6. Hooghly	22	13. Burdwan	88
7. Jalpaiguri	11	14. Darjeeling	2
TOTAL			294

compared to other districts. This may be due to the fact that the refugees did not want to go to those districts as the fertile cultivable land was very limited in those areas. This is corroborated by a Minister's Statement - "The refugees do not want to go to the districts of Bankura, Birbhum, Midnapur, but they want to go to Nadia District where more than 9 lakhs refugees are living. In other districts the productive lands are not there, so they do not want to go to those districts".<sup>12</sup> In Midnapur district there were 651 families in Government colonies and 2059 families in private colonies. In the towns of Kharagpur and Midnapur there were about 3500 refugees in 1957.

By 1960 many refugees had settled in Ranaghat and Chakdah. In Ranaghat there were about 3 lakhs refugees and there were 19 sponsored colonies. In addition there were 53,000 refugees in the camps.

12. Hemanta Kumar Basu, 2nd January, 1958, Twentieth Session, Assembly Proceedings, Vol. XX, No. 3, p. 601.



Refugee concentrations were there in Taherpur and Gayespur. In Santipur-Kalyani-Chakdah area there was a large concentration of refugees.<sup>13</sup> In Cooch Behar Municipality nine private colonies were established.<sup>14</sup> In 1962-63 many refugees had come to Murshidabad and Maldah districts after the riot in Rajshahi district in the same year. They were not, however, treated as refugees by the Government of West Bengal because they had no travel documents.<sup>15</sup> There were three Government-sponsored and seven private refugee colonies in Murshidabad district having 1609 families. Till 1965 there were 66 refugee colonies in Midnapur district distributed over 16 police stations, of which 25 were in Garbeta Police Station alone.

In 1967, according to the R.R. Department records, there were 503 Government-sponsored colonies in West Bengal. A Report published by CMDA in 1975 shows that West Bengal had 1104 colonies in all of which 46.19% (i.e. 510 colonies in number) were in the Calcutta Metropolitan District and the rest 53.81% (i.e. 594 colonies in number) were in other places of West Bengal.<sup>16</sup>

In the whole of West Bengal approximately 50% (27 lakhs) of the total refugee population are in the urban areas and the rest (32 lakhs) in rural areas. The concentration is higher in the bordering districts of Nadia and 24 Parganas.

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13. Haridas Dey, 9th March, 1960, Twentieth Session, Assembly Proceedings, Vol. XXV, No. 2, p. 35.
  14. Abha Maiti, 2nd March, 1962-63, Thirty Fourth Session, Assembly Proceedings, Vol. XXXIV, p. 420.
  15. Abha Maiti, 5th April, 1963, Thirtyfifth Session, Assembly Proceedings, Vol. XXXV, No. 3, p. 629.
  16. Monidip Chatterjee - A Broad outline of Action Programme for the development of Refugee colonies in C.M.D. - C.M.D.A. August, 1975, p. 4, Table 2:0.

sites, many refugees had to squat on the railway stations for several days.

By the end of October, 1958, there were 126 Rehabilitation and Transit camps accommodating, 1,88,386 and 26 Permanent Liability camps giving shelter to 52,296 refugees. This is revealed from Table 3. About 2,40,600 persons were living in camps, homes and infirmaries.

When the Government realised that the refugees had no scope of returning to East Pakistan, they undertook some measures to rehabilitate them in a permanent manner. In certain areas Government undertook construction of houses which came to be known as Government-sponsored colonies later.

In the late '50s the Government of India and the Government of West Bengal conceived the idea of establishing colonies or townships in different parts of Bengal. One such township was started by the Government of India at a place called Fulia in Nadia District. In Kanchrapara area also 12,000 acres of land were taken by the Government of West Bengal for the purpose of founding a township for middle class population.<sup>19</sup>

Table 4 shows that in the time span of ten years (1948-1958) about 389 Government-sponsored colonies were established accommodating 2,43,765 refugees. About 54% of these colonies were in 24 Parganas District alone. Out of 389 Government-sponsored colonies 166 were urban colonies and 223 rural ones. In Hooghly district there were rural agricultural colonies as revealed from Table 5. There were only 76 rural non-agricultural colonies in West Bengal.

19. Speaker, 8th February, 1951, Third Session, (Budget), Assembly Proceedings, Vol.III, No.1, p.2.

There were five types of colonies set up by the Government as shown below<sup>20</sup> :

- a) Urban colonies for middle class refugees;
- b) Rural colonies for non-agriculturists;
- c) Colonies for agriculturists;
- d) Barujibi colonies;
- e) Fishermen's colonies.

The latest Government records show that for the settlement of refugees the State Government acquired about 85,000 acres of land to set up 528 colonies all over the State, of which 288 colonies are in urban areas and 240 in rural areas, including 145 purely agricultural colonies.

Table 4 shows that out of the total refugee population of 32 lakhs in West Bengal in 1958, only 4.8 lakhs were accommodated in the camps, Homes and Government-sponsored colonies. About 27.7 lakhs of refugees remained outside camps and colonies. Many of these refugees sought shelter by illegally occupying the vacant lands. These colonies received no Government aid and were characterised as squatters' colonies.

By 1967 there were 503 Government-sponsored colonies and 756 non-Government colonies in West Bengal.<sup>21</sup> The Government-sponsored colonies and the Squatters' colonies emerged on the mosaic of West Bengal at different point of time. As regards the squatters' colonies, they were set up in a haphazard manner and there is no record as regards

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20. S.J. Bijesh Chandra Sen on 13th March, 1953, Seventh Session (Budget), Assembly Proceedings, Vol.VII, No.2, pp.1053-1054.

21. Under the Head "Demand for grant" on 26th July, 1967, Assembly Proceedings, Vol.XLV, No.1, Fortyfifth Session, pp.669-710.

their year of establishment. But as the Government-sponsored colonies were set up through proper schemes and plans, their approximate years of establishment can easily be identified.

Within the Calcutta Metropolitan District, in the early 1950s (1950-55) 53 Government-sponsored colonies were established, and in next five years another group of 41 colonies emerged on the mosaic of the C.M.D. During 1961-65 and 1966-70, 42 and 16 Government-sponsored colonies respectively were established. In 1971 only one colony and in 1973 three colonies were set up. (Table 8). The emergence of the Government-sponsored colonies had thus been a gradual process extending upto early 1970s.

Squatters' colonies also came into being along with the Government-sponsored colonies. As their period of establishment has not been recorded properly they were grouped as pre-1950 and post-1950 squatters' colonies.

At many points of time in the history of refugee rehabilitation programmes, Government thought of closing down the camps but that had never been possible because the exodus of refugees remained unabated and the need for fresh camps never disappeared.

#### REFUGEES IN THE CALCUTTA METROPOLITAN DISTRICT :

Since 1947 the migration of the refugees from East Pakistan continued in waves from time to time upto March, 1971. The migrants can be broadly divided into three groups according to their time of arrivals. These are as follows<sup>22</sup> :

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22. Report of the working Group on Residual Problem of Rehabilitation in West Bengal - Ministry of Supply and Rehabilitation, March 1976, p.1.

- a) Old Migrants - (i) Those who migrated between October, 1946, and March, 1958. About 31.32 lakhs of the migrants stayed in West Bengal.
- (ii) Those who migrated between April, 1958, and December, 1963. They were not eligible for any rehabilitation assistance from the Government. The exact number of such persons is not known but about 55,000 were estimated to have migrated to West Bengal.
- b) New Migrants - Those who came between January, 1964, and March, 1971. About six lakhs remained in West Bengal. A policy decision was taken by the Central Government in 1964 in consultation with the State Government that relief and rehabilitation assistance would be admissible only to those New Migrants who sought admission into relief camps outside West Bengal and were willing to be resettled outside the State.

The chronological statement of the influx of migrants from the erstwhile East Pakistan into India as given in Table 6 shows the magnitude of the influx which varied from year to year for over two decades. From the chronological statement it is quite clear that the largest bulk of refugees (30.91 lakhs) had come in the first few years between 1947 and 1952.

According to the Assembly Proceedings, 10 to 12 thousands people came to West Bengal everyday till mid-1948. By the end of 1948, West Bengal had 13 to 15 lakhs refugees from East Pakistan.

The Delhi Pact was concluded on 8th April, 1950, after which Muslim migrants started coming back to West Bengal and some Hindus returned to East Pakistan, although the bulk of them stayed back. As an effect of the Delhi Pact, out of 35 lakhs, about 12 lakhs refugees

had returned to East Pakistan.<sup>23</sup>

In the beginning of the year 1948 it was not quite understood as to what was or what would be the nature and extent of refugee influx in West Bengal. The Government opened 40 camps and the available military hutments were generally utilized. After sometime the Government of West Bengal thought of closing down these camps and of accommodating the refugees in work sites. But with the passage of time as the influx continued, the number of camps had to be increased to give shelter to the refugees. Along with the setting up of camps three broad types of colonies emerged within the physical mosaic of the Calcutta Metropolitan District, viz., (1) Government-sponsored colonies; (2) Squatter's colonies - a) Pre-1950; b) Post-1950; (3) Private colonies.

Simultaneously with this process the Government of West Bengal started the construction of buildings at varying costs in order to rehabilitate the refugees in a permanent manner. These houses finally came to be included in the Government-sponsored colonies where the Government first acquired land for the settlement of the refugees and then prepared a layout plan. Lastly, the refugee families held up in different transit camps were brought to these settlements.<sup>24</sup>

In addition to the Government-sponsored colonies mentioned above the Squatters' colonies also emerged on the scene on account of the following two main factors :

- a) Government's failure to manage the gigantic exodus of refugee population from East Pakistan. This denied the refugee families any kind of shelter for a pretty long time.

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23. Speaker, 8th February, 1951, Third Session (Budget) Assembly Proceedings, Vol.III, No.1, p.2.

24. Ibid.

- b) Strong desire of millions uprooted from their homeland for getting a foothold in this country.

As a result of the above factors, a large number of refugees flocked around the metropolitan city and got hold of any kind of vacant land, without any discrimination between Government or private lands, for their urgent need of erecting some kind of shelter. The squatter's colonies are, by definition, unplanned colonies. There is, however, evidence of commendable leadership in the organisers of these colonies which led to rudimentary sub-division pattern improvised by themselves while allocating the homestead plots among the compatriots.<sup>25</sup> This became a severe law and order problem in course of time. These squatters could not be ejected without finding alternate accommodation for them and ultimately the Government had to pass the West Bengal Eviction of Persons in Unauthorised Occupation of Land Bill (Act XV of 1951). The Squatter's colonies set up till December, 1950, were grouped as pre-1950 Squatter's colonies and those set up after 1950 were termed as post-1950 Squatters' colonies.

As the city of Calcutta attracted millions of refugees, before 1950, a large number of colonies emerged within Calcutta Corporation area itself. About 26 pre-1950 Squatters' colonies came up in the Dum Dum area of Calcutta Metropolis, 33 in South Dum Dum Municipality, 2 in Dum Dum Municipality, 1 in North Dum Dum Municipality and 3 in Dum Dum P.S. Adjacent to this area 12 such colonies were located within Panihati Municipality. Another area of concentration is the South-East portion of the C.M.D., that is Tollygunge-Jadavpur-Kasba-Behala-Garfa-Santoshpur area. In this area about 40 pre-1950 Squatters' colonies

25. Monidip Chatterjee - A Broad Outline of Action Programme for the Development of Refugee Colonies in C.M.D. - C.M.D.A., August, 1975, p.6.

were located. (Table 8) It is thus clear that the emergence of the Squatters' colonies in the municipal and corporation areas in large number is mainly due to the better infrastructural facilities and more job opportunities available in these areas.

By the end of 1950, a large number of refugees were forced by circumstances to utilise the low-lying waste and marshy lands around Calcutta for building their temporary huts. As the refugees who came in the first phase belonged to middle classes, for occupational purposes they wanted to live in and around Calcutta City. In this way the Squatters' colonies like Katju Colony, Netaji Colony, Bidhan Colony, etc., emerged in the suburbs of the Calcutta City which are now included in the Calcutta Metropolitan District.

Since May, 1952, the influx of refugees increased considerably. They were mostly agricultural labourers from Barisal and Khulna and they numbered about 1,93,000 between May and October, 1952.<sup>26</sup> With the introduction of the passport system on 15th October, 1952, the rate of influx of the refugees declined sharply and in 1954 it varied between 400 to 800 refugees only per month.<sup>27</sup>

In the Assembly Proceedings information is available regarding the number of refugees arriving every year. In the absence of any better source of data it will be useful to take them into consideration. However, if those figures are arranged chronologically, some discrepancies are noticed which create doubt about their absolute reliability. These can be used only for generalised estimates.

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26. Renuka Roy, 4th July, 1952, Sixth Session, Assembly Proceedings, Vol.VI, No.2, p.244.

27. Governor, 2nd February, 1953, Seventh Session, Assembly Proceedings, Vol.VII, No.1, p.11.



Till May, 1952, there were in all about 25 lakhs of refugees which rose to about 27 lakhs by 1955. Of the total refugees population in West Bengal, in 1955 alone about 1,27,799 persons crossed the borders and this shows that the influx increased in 1955 compared to that in 1954. This increased rate of influx continued throughout 1956 which is justified to some extent by the fact that in March 1956 about 1000 refugees arrived daily.<sup>28</sup>

The above figures give an idea about the general rate of influx but the information regarding their place of arrival is not given anywhere, not even in the Assembly Proceedings. The number of arrivals are given for the whole of West Bengal and from this information it is not possible to know how many of them came for settlement within the C.M.D. area. If the emergence of colonies during a certain period is analysed then the pattern of growth of settlements and habitation can be measured to a certain extent. During the period 1950-55 when the rate of influx of the refugees was quite high, about 53 Government-sponsored colonies were set up within the C.M.D. Unlike the pre-1950 Squatters' colonies, these colonies were not concentrated in one or two areas. Within Calcutta Corporation area there was only one colony and the rest were distributed in Barrackpur Municipality, Bauria N.M.U.A., Chinsurah P.S., Khardah P.S., Hooghly-Chinsurah P.S., Ehadreswar P.S., Sonarpur P.S., Bally Municipality, Chandannagar Corporation, Jagachha P.S. and so on. Each of them had one to two colonies within its jurisdiction (Table 8). This shows that the Government was more interested in dispersing the refugee population throughout the C.M.D. area, rather than allowing their concentration at one place.

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28. Renuka Roy, 12th March, 1956, Fourteenth Session, Assembly Proceedings, Vol.XIV, No.3, p.83.

Out of a total of 40 lakhs in the whole of the Eastern zone the number of displaced persons in West Bengal stood at 31.85 lakhs on 31st March, 1957, against Assam (4 lakhs), Tripura (3.5 lakhs) and other States (1.5 lakhs). In 1958-59 about 9000 refugees came which shows that the rate of refugee influx once again came down to a considerable extent compared to that in the earlier years. Between 1958 and 1963 the refugees who came to West Bengal were much less in number. Table 6 shows that only 0.55 lakhs entered West Bengal, during this period. During the periods 1956 to 1960 and 1961 to 1965, 41 and 42 Government-sponsored colonies emerged within the C.M.D. area. These colonies were distributed evenly almost in all the municipalities and police stations included in the C.M.D. area, from Mogra P.S. in the north to Sonarpur P.S. in the south. According to Government reports, till 1963 about 38 lakhs of refugees had entered West Bengal. Since communal disturbances started in the districts of Khulna, Jessore, Dacca, Chittagong and other areas 18,172 persons (mostly agriculturists) had crossed the Indo-Pakistan border and had come over to West Bengal in 1964.<sup>29</sup>

The influx of the refugees remained unabated throughout 1965 and in 1966 they numbered around 40,82,000 in West Bengal alone. According to Government records 42,59,604 persons came to West Bengal from East Pakistan upto 1970. Since 1966 the number of colonies set up by the Government were fewer than what was done during the previous periods. Between 1966-1970 only 16 Government-sponsored colonies were set up on both sides of the Hooghly river, including the newly formed Kalyani P.S. The Government-sponsored colonies were mostly built within the limits of the Police Stations and in very few cases within the Municipal boundaries.

29. Abha Maiti, 20th February, 1964, Thirtyeighth Session, Assembly Proceedings, Vol. XXXVIII, No.1, p.392.

From the third week of March, 1971, there was again an unprecedented influx of people from East Pakistan in new waves. It was estimated that from 20th March to 30th April, 1971, about 10,16,000 persons came to West Bengal. Since 1st May, 1971, about 14,500 refugees came mainly from Khulna and Jessore.<sup>30</sup>

During the war of 1971 between India and East Pakistan a total 74,93,474 persons (or about 7.5 million evacuees) sought shelter in West Bengal. Most of these evacuees, however, returned later. The repatriation started with the surrender of the Pakistan Army in Bangladesh on 6th December 1971.<sup>31</sup> (Table 7).

As the refugees who came after 1970 did not settle in large numbers within West Bengal, the number of Government-sponsored colonies which were set up ~~amounted~~ to only 4 in number.

#### REGULARISATION OF SQUATTERS' COLONIES :

In the early years when the illegal structures started coming up in the physical lay-out of the C.M.D., the Government thought of shifting these people to rehabilitation sites chosen by the Government. But later when it was found that the number of refugees were increasing at a rapid pace, the idea of eviction of these squatters' colonies was dropped. In 1951 "The Eviction of Persons in Unauthorised Occupation of Land Bill" was passed in the West Bengal State Assembly.<sup>32</sup> The Act may be said to have laid the basis of regularisation of the squatters'

30. Ananda Mohan Biswas, 12th May, 1971, Fiftyfirst Session, Assembly Proceedings, Vol.L1, p.227.

31. Governor, 24th March, 1972, Fiftysecond Session, Assembly Proceedings, Vol.52, No.1, p.13.

32. Rai Harendra Nath Chaudhuri, 5th April, 1951, Third Session, Assembly Proceedings, Vol.III, No.3, p.120.

colonies that came into existence upto 31st December, 1950. There was also a provision in the Act that in case alternative suitable lands could not be found, the Government could acquire the squatted land and regularise such settlements.

The regularisation of Squatters' colonies involved a very complicated process, as the Government had to negotiate with the owners for acquiring those lands. Preliminary steps like enumeration, measurement, etc., also took much time. On the completion of acquisition proceedings the Government could issue 'Ampannatras' (gift deeds) to the families on their establishing claims for regularisation. Compensation was paid by the State Government for the lands acquired for rehabilitation purposes.<sup>33</sup>

A number of difficulties however were involved in this process: (i) The squatters were in occupation of lands which did not belong to them. The Government was bound under the Constitution to honour the ownership of property. (ii) All the occupants of the Squatters' colonies were not bonafide refugees and as such they were to be identified. (iii) The Central Government which financed this scheme fixed certain amounts of money as the values of the lands and houses thereon. The price of the lands in the suburbs of Calcutta was quite high. So, the low price ceiling by the Government was another obstacle in the way of speedily regularising the colonies. Thus, 11 colonies in Tollygunge P.S. could not be regularised as the price ceiling was fixed at Rs.1250/- only per bigha. (iv) In some cases there were High Court injunctions which delayed the process.<sup>34</sup>

33. Abha Maiti, 22nd February, 1963, Thirtyfifth Session, Assembly Proceedings, Vol.XXXV, No.1, p.145.

34. Jogesh Ch. Gupta, 16th March, Ninth Session (Budget), Assembly Proceedings, Vol.IX, No.2, pp.1237-1240.

Delay in regularisation of squatters' colonies became inevitable when it was found that these colonies could only be regularised after the Land Planning and Development Act was amended. This took time. Out of all the pre-1950 Squatters' colonies to be regularised preliminary investigations were completed in 120 colonies and 21 colonies were completely regularised by 1956.<sup>35</sup>

Some of the colonies were partially regularised, viz., Jatindas Nagar, Deshapriyanagar of Barrackpore, Bejoynagar of Naihati, etc. As the price of the lands around Calcutta was quite high, Squatters' colonies on those lands could not be recognised easily. Till 1957, 69 colonies were regularised.<sup>36</sup> In Tollygunge out of about 63 colonies very few were fully rehabilitated. Out of 1400 plot holders in Bagha Jatin Colony, only 150 persons were given 'Arpanpatras'. Similar was the case in Netaji Colony, Vidyasagar Colony which were partially regularised. In 1957, in Dum Dum P.S. there were 37 pre-1950 Squatters' colonies, of which only 12 were fully regularised and 3 regularised in part.

The Squatters' colonies established after the year 1950, were not included in the list of Squatters' colonies to be regularised. In regularised Squatters' colonies Government paid only for the land which were given as compensation. Bonafide refugees in non-regularisable colonies could avail themselves of homestead land-purchase loans. Development of the colonies was no part of regularisation. Government has a separate scheme for developing regularised colonies. Out of

35. Renuka Roy, 13th March, 1956, Fourteenth Session, Assembly Proceedings, Vol.XII, No.3, pp.151-158.

36. Samar Mukhopadhyay, 10th July, 1957, Seventeenth Session, Assembly Proceedings, Vol.XVII, No.3, p.276.

147 Squatters' colonies, 136 were to be regularised of which 87 were regularised by 1958.<sup>37</sup> In Tollygunge Municipality and Calcutta Corporation 11 colonies could not be regularised due to high land prices. So the Corporation was asked by the Government to develop those colonies. In Kanchrapara Municipality there was 1 Government-sponsored colony and 5 Squatters' colonies which needed regularisation.<sup>38</sup>

By 1959, 92 colonies were regularised although regularisation was not done in a proper manner in Tollygunge area. In most of the colonies, like Vidyasagar Colony, Gandhinagar Colony, Sree Colony, Bidhan Colony, Netaji Colony, Sahidnagar Colony, Saktigarh Colony, out of the total number of plots, only a few were regularised or given 'Arpanpatras'. In Tollygunge area, out of 58 colonies, 44 were regularised by 1963.<sup>39</sup> There were about 40 Squatters' colonies within Dum Dum P.S. of which about 26 were regularised by 12th August, 1964. A complete list of all the colonies was, however, given with their homes, area under each colony and number of families in each of them.<sup>40</sup> By the end of August, 1964, all the pre-1950 squatters' colonies except five were regularised.<sup>41</sup>

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37. P.C. Sen, 7th July, 1958, Twentieth Session, Assembly Proceedings, Vol.XX, No.3, pp.131-144.

38. P.C. Sen, 16th December, 1958, Twentyfirst Session, Assembly Proceedings, Vol.XXI, No. , pp.60-72.

39. Abha Maiti, 22nd February, 1963, Thirtyfifth Session, Assembly Proceedings, Vol.XXXV, No.1, pp.145-158.

40. Abha Maiti, 12th August, 1964, Thirtynineth Session, Assembly Proceedings, Vol.XXXIX, No.1, p.860.

41. Ibid, 21st August, 1964, p.1414.

The Squatters' colonies set up by the migrants after 31st December, 1950, were not given any thought of recognition. The question of regularisation of these colonies has long been agitating the minds of the settlers. In the early '70s this was given a serious thought as it was becoming difficult to maintain the distinction between regularised and non-regularised Squatters' colonies. This meant confirmation of right and titles to lands in the post-1950 Squatters' colonies as well as the development of these colonies and improvement of the living conditions and environment to the same level as those in the colonies set up till 1950. Keeping this in mind, the post-1950 Squatters' colonies were also decided to be regularised and the process is still on.

C.M.D. - AFTER THE INFLUX OF THE REFUGEES :

Prior to partition the main area of habitation and economic activities was the city of Calcutta proper. After the partition of 1947, the continuous infiltration of refugees, however, changed the mosaic of settlements to a large extent. The suburbs of Calcutta, the forested areas, the low lying marshy areas around the city of Calcutta and the vacant areas within the Corporation area were occupied by the refugees. As discussed above, in the early years the fringe areas of Calcutta like Dum Dum, Tollygunge, Jadavpur were infiltrated by the displaced persons. With the passage of time as these areas became crowded, the refugees of the latter periods moved more towards the interior, i.e. to the rural areas, and also westward across the Hooghly river. This is revealed through the locations of the Squatters' colonies. The pre-1950 Squatters' colonies are mostly concentrated on the East Bank of the Hooghly river, right from Kalyani P.S. in the north to Sonarpur P.S. in the south. On the other hand the post-1950 Squatters' colonies have cropped up on the West Bank of the Hooghly river from Mogra P.S. in the north to Uluberia P.S. in the south.

Thus, for the post-1950 Squatters' colonies, unlike the pre-1950 Squatters' colonies, the main areas of concentration had been on the West Bank of the Hooghly river. Quite a large number of the post-1950 Squatters' colonies were set up in Bally Municipality, Howrah Corporation, Jagadaha Non-municipal Urban Area, Satragachi N.M.U.A. and Unswari N.M.U.A.

Unlike the Squatters' colonies, the colonies built up by the initiative of the Government are located on either side of the Hooghly river throughout the whole stretch of C.M.D. more or less evenly. These colonies are not only found within the municipal limits but rather more in various police stations under different mouzas. In all there are about 156 Government-sponsored colonies within C.M.D. of which there are 81 urban colonies and 72 rural colonies, established at different points of time. (Table 9). Only three of such colonies are located within Calcutta Corporation area. In this paper urban colonies have been taken as those which are located in the Corporations, municipalities and in non-municipal urban units. The rural colonies are those which are located in different mouzas under various police stations.

Taking together pre-1950 and post-1950 Squatters' colonies, there are 268 Squatters' colonies within the Calcutta Metropolitan District. Approximately, about 66% of the colonies (i.e. 178 of the colonies) are in the urban areas outside the city of Calcutta, 18% in the rural areas and about 16% (43 in number) in Calcutta Corporation area. There are at present 145 pre-1950 Squatters' colonies of which 84 are in urban areas and 35 in rural areas. 26 pre-1950 Squatters' colonies are within the Calcutta Metropolitan District. Since 1951 about 175 Squatters' colonies sprang up (123 enlisted by Refugee Relief and Rehabilitation Department) mainly in Bauria, Bally, Serampore, Chinsurah Police Stations and in Howrah Corporation. Out of 123, 17 are



in Calcutta Corporation area, 93 within other urban limits and 13 in rural areas, (Table 9).

The Squatters' colonies needed recognition by the Government and the inhabitants of such colonies needed titles of the lands on which they settled. This involved a complicated process, the details of which have been discussed earlier. In short, out of 149 pre-1950 Squatters' colonies 5 colonies could not be regularised. But by the end of August, 1964, all other colonies were regularised.<sup>42</sup> The post-1950 Squatters' colonies are still under the process of regularisation.

Besides Government-sponsored and Squatters' colonies there is another group of refugee colonies known as private colonies which grew haphazardly almost all over West Bengal. These were set up by the displaced persons themselves with or without Government assistance. This was done mostly through legal means, i.e., by acquiring or purchasing land. It is estimated that there are about 77 private colonies in the C.M.D. As the problems of these colonies are not dealt with in details by the Refugee Relief and Rehabilitation Department of the Government of West Bengal, the exact locations of these private colonies are difficult to identify.

From the above discussion it is clear that the sharp growth of settlements in the suburbs of the Calcutta Metropolis in the post-independence period has been mainly due to the influx of the refugees. Thus, the present Calcutta Metropolitan District with its settlements to a large extent is the resultant phenomenon of the hardships that were overcome by the uprooted millions from East Pakistan.

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42. Abha Maiti, 12th August, 1964, Thirtynineth Session, Assembly Proceedings, Vol. XXXIX, No. 1, p. 1414.

DISTRIBUTION PATTERN OF THE REFUGEE SETTLEMENTS WITHIN CALCUTTA METROPOLITAN DISTRICT :

In the Calcutta Metropolitan District, in total there are 501 refugees settlements including 77 private colonies about which very little information is available. Of the rest of the colonies (i.e. 424 in number) about 37% of the colonies (i.e. 156 in number) are Government-sponsored settlements and 63% of the colonies are Squatters' colonies (i.e. 268 in number). The higher number of Squatters' colonies bear evidence of the fact that the refugee settlements grew up more in a haphazard manner than in a planned way. Distribution of colonies within urban and rural jurisdictions is analysed in Table 8.

- i) Colonies in urban areas : Urban colonies are those which are located within the boundaries of corporations, municipalities and non-municipal urban areas. Within the Calcutta Metropolitan District there are 258 urban colonies along with 46 more within Calcutta Corporation area. Thus, out of a total of 424 colonies within the C.M.D. 304 are located in the urban areas, which come to around 71% of the total. Of these 304 urban colonies, 220 are Squatters' colonies and the rest 84 colonies are Government-sponsored. Out of 220 Squatters' colonies, 50% (110 in number) belong to the pre-1950 group while the rest (110 in number) belong to the post-1950 group. The number of urban colonies are more on the East Bank of the Hooghly river compared to those on the West Bank. Leaving aside the colonies within the Calcutta Corporation area, out of 81 Government-sponsored urban colonies 68 are located on the East Bank, and only 13 are on the West Bank. About 50% of the total Government-sponsored colonies in the C.M.D. are in urban areas. Similar is the case with the Squatters' colonies. Leaving aside 43 urban colonies within Calcutta Corporation area, out of 177 urban colonies 84 belong to pre-1950 group while 93 were established after 1950. Of the 84 pre-1950 Squatters' colonies only 2 are on the West Bank while 82 of them are on

the East Bank. 2/3 of the post-1950 urban Squatters' colonies are located on the East Bank and they number about 61 while only one-third (32 in number) of the total of 93 are located on the West Bank. Thus, within the C.M.D., taking all the colonies together, out of 258 urban colonies, 211 (81.6%) are on the East Bank.<sup>43</sup>

- ii) Colonies in rural areas : Rural colonies are those which are located in various mouzas under different police stations. In the whole of Calcutta Metropolitan District, only 28.3% of the colonies (120 in number) are in the rural areas. Of these 120 colonies, 72 are Government-sponsored and 48 are Squatters' colonies. The Squatters' colonies are larger in number in urban areas, while in the rural areas Government-sponsored colonies are more in number. Leaving aside the colonies within Calcutta Corporation area, out of the 225 Squatters' colonies outside the Calcutta Corporation area only 48 are in rural areas; 35 belonging to pre-1950 group and 13 enlisted in the post-1950 category.

There is an exception to this pattern as regards the Government-sponsored colonies of whom about 50% of the colonies are in the rural areas (72 colonies) and approximately 50% are in the urban areas (81 colonies). This may be because the Government had tried to set up the colonies outside the urban fringe of Calcutta and in the suburban municipal areas in order to lessen the pressure of population on land and on the economy of the Calcutta city. But the Squatters' colonies were more drawn to the urban areas for better employment opportunities. In general, the concentration of refugees is less in the rural areas than in the urban areas. This may be due to the dearth of agricultural land suitable for cultivation, as a source of employment.

43. All the figures refer to Table 9 of the Appendix.

Out of 72 rural Government-sponsored colonies, 38 are located on the East Bank while 34 colonies are distributed on the West Bank of the Hooghly river. As stated earlier, there are 35 pre-1950 Squatters' colonies of which 33 are distributed on the East Bank while only 2 are on the West Bank. Maximum number of post-1950 Squatters' colonies are in the urban areas and out of 13 rural post-1950 Squatters' colonies 9 are on the East Bank and the rest on the West Bank. This shows that only 6 rural Squatters' colonies are on the West Bank while 34 urban colonies are there on the same Bank. Thus, in the whole of Calcutta Metropolitan District, out of 120 rural colonies 80 are on the East Bank and 40 are on the West Bank.

While discussing the distribution pattern of the refugee settlements in urban and rural areas of the C.M.D. one has to explain why the concentration of refugee settlements is higher on the East Bank of the Hooghly River than on the West Bank both in the rural and urban areas of the C.M.D. One can presume that when the refugees had crossed the Indo-Pakistan border, they readily settled on the marshy, forested and vacant infertile lands on the Eastern Bank itself instead of crossing the river. In the whole of the Calcutta Metropolitan District there are 291 colonies, 204 on the East Bank. On the West Bank there are only 87 colonies, that is, less than one-fourth of those on the East Bank. Distribution of colonies on East Bank and West Bank of Hooghly river is given in Table 10 and Table 11 respectively.

Distribution pattern of refugee settlements on the East Bank of the Hooghly River : On the East Bank the concentration of the pre-1950 Squatters' colonies, is the highest, as is clear from Table 10. These are mostly concentrated in South Dum Dum Municipality (32 colonies), Panihati Municipality (12 colonies) and in Tollygunge

Police Station (38 colonies). Unlike these pockets of concentration, the Government-sponsored colonies are mostly uniformly distributed. Similarly, the post-1950 Squatters' colonies do not show any area of high concentration except in Panihati Municipality having 14 colonies and South Dum Dum Municipality having 12 colonies. Thus, it is clear that on the East Bank there are three areas where refugee settlements are concentrated - South Dum Dum Municipality, Panihati Municipality and Tollygunge Police Station.

Distribution Pattern of refugee settlements on West Bank of

Hooghly River : As regards the concentration of refugee colonies on the West Bank the most significant fact which emerges from Table 11 is that the pre-1950 Squatters' colonies are only four in number. As noted already, the main reason for this may be that when the influx of the refugees started in the late forties, they immediately settled on the vacant lands that were available at that time on the East Bank and they were not inclined to cross the river. But with the passage of time, as most of the vacant lands on the East Bank were occupied, in the post-1950's the refugees did not have any alternative but to cross over to the West Bank and occupy the lands that were available. Maximum number of post-1950 Squatters' colonies are located in Bally and Howrah Municipalities. This may be due to the concentration of small-scale industries in these two areas, which could offer employment to thousands of hunger-stricken refugees. As regards the Government-sponsored colonies, they show the same even distribution pattern as on the East Bank. The majority of them are located in the rural areas (34 colonies out of a total of 47) with 12 of them in the Chinsurah Police Station.

In general, from the distribution pattern of the refugee settlements it is quite clear that the Government-sponsored colonies

are more evenly distributed within Calcutta Metropolitan District as compared to the Squatters' colonies which show a tendency towards concentration in some identifiable areas.

CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS :

In the process of rehabilitation, marked changes have taken place in physical, economic, social, cultural and political mosaic of the whole of West Bengal and this is significantly visible in the Calcutta Metropolitan District.

Physically, it is found that a number of settlements or colonies have occupied quite significant locations in the heart of West Bengal, specially in and around Calcutta city proper. In terms of physical impact on cultural landscape, migration of refugee population played a key role in forming the coalescence of the metropolitan district which was, before independence, only a combination of different isolated urban settlements. The refugee population pioneered in extending the horizon of metropolitan living beyond the limits of existing settlements. The refugee population and their settlements are largely responsible to set into motion the growth dynamics observed now in different parts of metropolitan district.<sup>44</sup> The urban areas have become denser and the vacant marshy areas in the suburbs of Calcutta have come under habitation, due to the impact of migration from East Pakistan.

After 1963 a group of 1,91,000 refugees came in and settled around Calcutta industrial area. Outside Greater Calcutta about 12,17,000 refugees were settled.<sup>45</sup> There were 503 Government-sponsored

44. Monidip Chatterjee - A Broad Outline to action programme for the development of refugee colonies in the C.M.D. - C.M.D.A. August, 1975.

45. Demand for grant, 20th July, 1967, Fortyfifth Session, Assembly Proceedings, Vol.XLV, No.1, pp.667-710.

colonies and 756 non-Government colonies in West Bengal. The most rapid growth of Greater Calcutta had occurred in the fringe areas of Calcutta and in the municipalities immediately bordering the core city. A great deal of this rapid suburban growth over the past decade (213% in North Dum Dum, 81% in South Dum Dum, 62% in Kamarhati, 89% in Panihati, 82% in Barasat and 98% in South Suburban) had been the result of the continuous influx of refugees from East Pakistan.<sup>46</sup>

However, the whole economic foundation of West Bengal was shaken during the early fifties when the influx was at its peak. Although the Government of West Bengal tried to absorb the bulk of the refugees within the economic set up of the State, they were hardly successful. The economy of West Bengal, had to make provisions for the rehabilitation of the refugees. West Bengal at one time had been an agricultural State with very fertile soil and adequate rainfall. But in the past few decades it saw radical changes specially in the urban field overburdened with the poverty-stricken tertiary sector. In the process of economic change the refugees have not been able to retain their traditional occupations. Most of the Barujibi families, as for example, have left their traditional occupation and have become either small or marginal farmers or agricultural labourer.<sup>47</sup> Non-availability of agricultural land forced many migrants to become non-agriculturists in the changed circumstances in West Bengal. The high concentration of refugees in the urban areas bears testimony to this fact.

There has been one language spoken by the two Bengals, (i.e. West Bengal and East Bengal - as they were formerly called) but the

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46. Budget 1969-70, 10th March, 1969, Fortyeighth Sessions, Assembly Proceedings, Vol.48, pp.48-49.

47. Report of the Working Group on the Residual Problem of Rehabilitation In West Bengal, Ministry of Supply and Rehabilitation, Government of India, March 1976, p.23.

social custom, culture, etc., had shades of differences. So when the Hindu minorities entered West Bengal from East Bengal and settled in various places, there was considerable interchange of culture, custom and social behaviour between the people of the two Bengals. The social distance between the two Bengals has, as a result, become shorter with time. Undoubtedly such changes have social significance and should be given due recognition.

During and after the partition the refugee influx and rehabilitation problems have given rise to important political issue which led to burning debates and discussions in the Assembly and at various platforms for many years. Many turns in the political atmosphere of West Bengal can be attributed to this highly sensitive phenomenon.

Calcutta Metropolitan District having both urban and rural features, has provided the ideal background to visualise these comparative changes in their proper perspective. The discrepancy between the urban and the rural areas of the C.M.D. has thrown added light on the theme of this paper as the reality can best be explored through deeper analysis of these two components of Settlement Geography.

The limitation of data and other factual information has stood in the way of giving this study the desired critical touch and has left it mostly as a descriptive discourse. For a proper evaluation of the subject aimed at bringing out the nature and degree of the impact of refugee settlements within the Calcutta Metropolitan District it is necessary to supplement adequately the data and facts incorporated in this paper by additional information collected from the field and other sources.



TABLE 1

CONCENTRATION OF REFUGEES IN WEST BENGAL AND C.M.D.

POPULATION	URBAN	RURAL	TOTAL
1. Refugee Population in West Bengal (1973)	2,724,936(a)	3,274,539	5,999,475
2. Total Population in West Bengal (1971)	10,967,033(b)	33,344,978	44,312,011
3. Percentage Share of Refugee Population in West Bengal	24.85	9.82	13.54
4. Refugee Population in C.M.D. (1973)	1,926,900(c)	445,370	2,372,270
5. Total Population in C.M.D. (1971)	7,451,101(b) (100%)	857,471 (100%)	8,308,572 (100%)
6. Percentage Share of Refugee Population in C.M.D.	25.86	51.94	28.55

Source: Mohidip Chatterjee - A Broad Outline to Action Programme for the Development of Refugee Colony in C.M.D., August, 1975, C.M.D.A.

TABLE 2

## CONCENTRATION OF REFUGEES IN WEST BENGAL / DECEMBER 1973 /

DISTRICTS	URBAN AREAS		RURAL AREAS						TOTAL	
	Total Actual	% of Col.2 to Col.10	Total Actual	% of Col.4 to Col.10	Agriculturists	% of Col.6 to Col.10	Non-Agriculturists	% of Col.8 to Col.10	Actual	%
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. 24 Parganas	8,95,950	54.3	7,54,050	45.7	2,92,500	17.7	4,61,450	28.0	16,50,000	100
2. Nadia	3,75,175	25.0	11,25,575	75.0	5,86,319	39.0	5,39,250	36.0	15,00,750	100
3. Calcutta	9,00,000	100	-	-	-	-	-	-	9,00,000	100
4. Cooch Behar	37,155	8.4	4,05,345	91.6	2,09,740	47.4	1,95,605	44.2	4,42,500	100
5. West Dinajpur	37,735	13.0	2,54,765	87.0	1,12,750	39.0	1,42,015	48.0	2,92,500	100
6. Jalpaiguri	37,335	15.0	2,11,665	85.0	89,210	35.8	1,22,455	49.2	2,49,000	100
7. Burdwan	73,800	30.7	1,66,200	69.3	48,340	20.0	1,17,860	49.3	2,40,000	100
8. Hooghly	1,04,219	65.6	54,781	34.4	12,640	8.0	42,141	26.4	1,59,000	100
9. Howrah	1,01,305	70.0	42,695	30.0	2,520	1.7	40,175	28.3	1,44,000	100
10. Murshidabad	55,620	41.0	79,380	59.0	50,320	37.0	29,060	22.0	1,35,000	100
11. Maldah	25,500	20.0	1,02,000	80.0	76,410	60.0	25,590	20.0	1,27,500	100
12. Midnapur	28,552	45.0	34,448	55.0	18,940	30.0	15,508	25.0	63,000	100
13. Darjeeling	29,800	62.0	18,200	38.0	8,900	18.6	9,290	19.4	48,000	100
14. Birbhum	15,480	49.0	16,020	51.0	9,600	31.0	6,420	20.0	31,500	100
15. Bankura	6,725	42.7	9,025	57.3	2,700	17.0	6,325	40.3	15,750	100
16. Purulia	585	60.0	390	40.0	Nil	Nil	390	40.0	975	100
WEST BENGAL	27,24,936	45.4	32,74,539	54.6	15,21,299	21.0	17,53,240	33.6	59,99,475	100

Source: Proposals for Allocation of Special Funds for Refugee Concentrated Areas in West Bengal in the Fifth Five Year Plan - Refugee Relief and Rehabilitation Department, February 1974.

TABLE 3

DISTRICTWISE DISTRIBUTION OF CAMPS AND HOMES, NUMBER OF  
FAMILIES AND POPULATION (END OF OCTOBER 1958)

DISTRICTS	Rehabilitation and Transit Camps			Homes & Infirmaries (Permanent Liability)			Total (Camps & Homes)		
	No. of Camps.	Families	Popula- tion	No. of Camps	Families	Popula- tion	No. of Camps	Families	Popula- tion
1. Burdwan	28	10,005	41,248	2	653	1,879	30	10,658	43,127
2. Birbhum	17	4,184	17,400	-	-	-	17	4,184	17,400
3. Bankura	6	2,354	9,874	1	461	1,291	11	4,160	11,165
4. Midnapur	9	3,351	13,969	2	809	2,869	11	4,867	16,838
5. Hooghly	8	3,379	14,438	3	1,488	3,575	7	2,045	18,013
6. Howrah	6	1,803	7,534	1	242	245	45	11,038	7,779
7. 24 Parganas	39	9,510	40,115	6	1,528	3,169	-	1,870	43,284
8. Calcutta	2	702	2,965	5	1,168	2,094	7	17,726	5,059
9. Nadia	1	6,103	25,986	6	11,623	37,174	7	2,904	63,160
10. Murshidabad	8	2,904	12,709	-	-	-	8	2,904	12,709
11. Maldah	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
12. West Dinajpur	1	230	989	-	-	-	1	230	989
13. Jalpaiguri	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
14. Darjeeling	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
15. Cooch Behar	1	284	1,159	-	-	-	1	284	1,159
TOTAL	126	44,809	1,88,386	26	17,972	52,296	152	62,781	2,40,682

Source: Relief and Rehabilitation of Displaced Persons in West Bengal.  
Statement Issued by Government of West Bengal, December 15th, 1958.

TABLE 4

## REFUGEE POPULATION IN WEST BENGAL, 1958

DISTRICTS	REFUGEE POPULATION					Total Refugee Population
	In Camps & Homes		In Government Colonies		Outside Camps and Colonies	
	a	Population	b	Population		
1. Burdwan	30	43,127	8	6,895	1,08,481	1,58,503
2. Birbhum	17	17,400	6	1,775	4,375	23,550
3. Bankura	7	11,165	2	50	4,796	16,011
4. Midnapur	11	16,838	38	4,390	22,654	43,882
5. Hooghly	11	18,013	38	21,580	65,017	1,04,610
6. Howrah	7	7,779	16	7,575	75,781	91,135
7. 24 Parganas	45	43,284	209	1,05,345	7,14,161	8,62,790
8. Calcutta	7	15,059	-	-	5,71,555	5,76,614
9. Nadia	7	53,160	32	61,640	5,39,730	6,64,530
10. Murshidabad	8	12,709	21	9,945	53,443	76,097
11. Maldah	-	-	12	2,939	69,994	72,924
12. West Dinajpur	1	989	11	3,865	1,58,095	1,62,949
13. Jalpaiguri	-	-	9	7,850	1,42,306	1,50,156
14. Darjeeling	-	-	2	3,375	26,668	30,043
15. Cooch Behar	1	1,159	12	6,550	2,20,118	2,27,827
16. Purulia	-	-	-	-	1,332	1,332
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>2,40,682</b>	<b>389</b>	<b>2,43,765</b>	<b>27,78,506</b>	<b>32,62,952</b>

N.B.: a - No. of Camps & Homes  
b - No. of Colonies

Source: Relief and Rehabilitation of Displaced Persons in West Bengal - Statement issued by Government of West Bengal, December 15th, 1958.

TABLE 5

NUMBER OF GOVERNMENT SPONSORED COLONIES AND THEIR  
POPULATION IN THE DISTRICTS OF WEST BENGAL 1958

DISTRICTS	Urban Colonies		Rural Agricultural Colonies		Non-Agricultural Colonies		TOTAL	
	No.	Population	No.	Population	No.	Population	No.	Population
1. Burdwan	7	6,735	1	180	-	-	8	6,895
2. Birbhum	3	1,265	2	390	1	120	6	1,775
3. Bankura	1	50	1	-	-	-	2	50
4. Midnapur	3	2,815	5	1,395	3	180	11	4,390
5. Hooghly	25	14,760	44	1,710	9	5,110	38	21,580
6. Howrah	14	7,380	-	-	2	195	16	7,575
7. 24 Parganas	85	65,250	84	16,835	40	23,260	209	1,05,345
8. Calcutta	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
9. Nadia	11	43,900	16	13,920	5	3,820	32	61,640
10. Murshidabad	4	1,650	9	2,375	8	5,920	21	9,945
11. Maldah	4	1,520	5	970	3	440	12	2,930
12. West Dinajpur	-	-	9	2,860	2	1,005	11	3,865
13. Jalpaiguri	5	5,470	3	1,780	1	600	9	7,859
14. Darjeeling	2	3,375	-	-	-	-	2	3,375
15. Cooch Behar	2	695	8	4,775	2	1,080	12	6,550
16. Purulia	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>1,54,865</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>47,170</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>41,730</b>	<b>389</b>	<b>2,43,765</b>

Source: Relief and Rehabilitation of Displaced Persons in West Bengal. Statement Issued by Government of West Bengal, 15th December, 1958.

TABLE 8

DISTRIBUTION OF COLONIES ACCORDING TO THEIR YEARS OF ESTABLISHMENT  
GOVERNMENT-SPONSORED COLONIES

Year	No. of Colonies	No. of Families	Average No. of Families Per Colony	Largest and the Smallest (no. of families) of Colonies*		IDENTIFICATION OF LOCALITIES
				Largest	Smallest	
	2	3	4	5	6	
1950-55	53	8109	153	1780	13	Cal. Corp., Tollygunge P.S., Barrackpore Mun., Bauria NMOA, Chinsurah P.S., Madhyangram NMUA, Panihati Mun., North Dum Dum Mun., Bally Mun., Jagachha P.S., Howrah Mun., Chandernagar Corp., Batanagar NMUA, Santoshpur NMUA, South Suburban Mun., Jagaddal P.S., Kanchrapara Mun., Khardah P.S., Hooghly-Chinsurah Mun., Bansdroni NMUA, New Barrackpore Mun., Hhadreswar P.S., Sonarpur P.S., Barasat P.S., Garulia Mun., Dum Dum P.S., Halisahar Mun., Serampore P.S., Beidyabati Mun., Mogra P.S.
1956-60	41	4512	110 approx.	603	6	South Suburban Mun., Sonarpur P.S., Barasat Mun., Panihati Mun., Jagaddal P.S., Khardah P.S., Jagachha P.S., Sankrail P.S., Bauria NMUA, Howrah Mun., Serampore P.S., Behala P.S., Tollygunge P.S., Madhyangram NMUA, Rajarhat P.S., Chinsurah P.S., Cal. Corp., Baranagar Mun., Dum Dum P.S., North Dum Dum Mun., Naihati P.S., New Barrackpore Mun., Kamarhati Mun., Nabapalli NMUA, Ehatpara Mun.
1961-65	42	7086	169 approx.	921	10	Sonarpur P.S., Hhadreswar P.S., Chinsurah P.S., South Suburban Mun., Rajpur Mun., Kasba NMUA, Barasat P.S., Kamarhati Mun., Jagaddal P.S., Uttarpara P.S., Katagunj-Colulpur NMUA, Panihati Mun., Halisahar Mun., Garulia Mun., New Barrackpore Mun., Behala P.S., Tollygunge P.S., Khardah P.S., Ehatpara Mun., Baranagar Mun., Unsani NMUA, Kalyani P.S., Mogra P.S.

Year	No. of Colonies	No. of Families	Average No. of Families Per Colony	Largest and the Smallest (no. of families) of Colonies		IDENTIFICATION OF LOCALITIES
				Largest	Smallest	
1	2	3	4	5	6	
1966-70	16	4311	269 approx.	2639	19	Behala P.S., Santragachi NMUA, New Barrackpore Mun., Chinsurah P.S., Ehadreswar P.S., Katagung-Gokulpur NMUA, Tollygunge P.S., South Suburban Mun., Gayeshpur Govt. Colony NMUA, Baranagar Mun., Sankrail P.S., Bansberia Mun.
'71	1	33	33	33	33	Khardah P.S.
'73	3	425	142 approx.	318	50	Bijpur P.S., Chinsurah P.S., Ehadreswar P.S.
TOTAL (G.S.)	156	24476	157 approx.	2639	6	
PRE-1950 SQUATTERS' COLONIES	145	28343	195 approx.	1713	14	Kanchrapara Mun., Halisahar Mun., Calcutta Corp., Deulpara NMUA, Jagaddal P.S., Ehatpara Mun., New Barrackpore Mun., Noapara P.S., Titagarh Mun., Panihati Mun., Khardah Mun., Kamarhati Mun., Baranagar Mun., South Dum Dum Mun., Dum Dum Mun., Dum Dum P.S., North Dum Dum Mun., Serampore P.S., Serampore Mun., Howrah Mun., Bansdroni NMUA, Behala P.S., Tollygunge P.S., Kasba NMUA, Jadavpur NMUA, Garia NMUA, Santoshpur NMUA.
POST-1950 SQUATTERS' COLONIES	123	11289	92 approx.	382	7	Calcutta Corp., Dum Dum P.S., South Dum Dum Mun., Behala P.S., South Suburban Mun., Baranagar Mun., Kamarhati Mun., Barasat Mun., Panihati Mun., North Dum Dum Mun., Jagaddal P.S., Kanchrapara Mun., New Barrackpore Mun., Barrackpore Mun., Titagarh Mun., Deulpara NMUA, Serampore Mun., Chinsurah P.S., Uttarpore P.S., Chandannagar Corp., Bally NMUA, Bally Mun., Howrah Mun., Bally P.S., Jagachha NMUA, Santragachi NMUA, Unsani NMUA.

\* Figures in columns (5) + (6) indicate the numbers of families.

TABLE 9

## DISTRIBUTION OF COLONIES ACCORDING TO THEIR LOCATIONS

## I- GOVERNMENT-SPONSORED COLONIES :

Year	No. of Urban Colonies on East Bank	No. of Urban Colonies on West Bank	Total No. of Urban Colonies	No. of Rural Colonies on East Bank	No. of Rural Colonies on West Bank	Total No. of Rural Colonies	Total No. of Colonies on East Bank (U+R)	Total No. of Colonies on West Bank (U+R)	Total No. of Colonies East Bank + West Bank	No. of Colonies in Calcutta Corpn.	Total No. of Colonies Within C.M.D.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1950-55	20	8	28	12	11	23	32	19	51	1	52
1956-60	20	2	22	11	7	18	31	9	40	2	42
1961-62	19	1	20	12	10	22	31	11	42	-	42
1966-70	8	2	10	2	4	6	10	6	16	-	16
1971	1	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	1
1973	-	-	-	1	2	3	1	2	3	-	3
TOTAL (G.S)	68	13	81	38	34	72	106	47	153	3	156

## II- SQUATTERS' COLONIES :

Pre-1950	82	2	84	33	2	35	115	4	119	26	145
Post-1950	61	32	93	9	4	13	70	36	106	17	123
Total (Squatters')	143	34	177	41	6	48	185	40	225	43	268
Grand Total of all Colonies within C.M.D. (G.S. and Squatters)	211	47	258	80	40	120	291	87	378	46	424

Note : The table has been prepared on the basis of locations of the Colonies within Calcutta Metropolitan District.



TABLE 10

DISTRIBUTION PATTERN OF REFUGEE SETTLEMENTS  
ON THE EAST BANK OF HOOGHLY RIVER

Location	Govt. Spon- sored Colo- nies	Pre-1950 Squatters' Colonies	Post-1950 Squatters' Colonies
1	2	3	4
I - URBAN - Total (a+b)	68	82	61
a.) MUNICIPALITIES :	52	67	60
1. Kanchrapara	2	2	4
2. Halisahar	3	2	-
3. Ehatpara	2	1	-
4. Garulia	3	-	-
5. North Barrackpore	4	4	6
6. Barrackpore	2	-	4
7. Titagarh	-	1	1
8. Khardah	7	3	-
9. Naihati	-	-	-
10. Panihati	7	12	14
11. Kamarhati	3	3	4
12. Baranagar	4	4	3
13. Barasat	2	-	3
14. New Barrackpore	1	-	-
15. North Dum Dum	3	1	4
16. Dum Dum	-	2	-
17. South Dum Dum	-	32	12
18. South Suburban	9	-	5

Table 10 (contd.)

Location	Govt. Sponsored Colonies	Pre-1950 Squatters' Colonies	Post-1950 Squatters' Colonies
1	2	3	4
b) NON-MUNICIPAL URBAN UNITS :	16	15	1
19. Kalyani	5	-	-
20. Naihati	-	2	1
21. Barasat	5	-	-
22. Tollygunge	5	13	-
23. Mahestala	1	-	-
II - RURAL- Total (c)	38	33	9
c) Police - Station :	38	33	9
24. Jagaddal	9	2	1
25. Khardah	4	-	-
26. Kalyani	2	-	-
27. Barasat	3	-	-
28. Dum Dum	3	3	3
29. Tollygunge	6	25	-
30. Behala	4	3	4
31. Sonarpur	4	-	1
32. Bijpur	1	-	-
33. Naihati	1	-	-
34. Rajarhat	1	-	-
TOTAL (Urban + Rural)	106	115	70

TABLE 11

DISTRIBUTION PATTERN OF REFUGEE SETTLEMENTS ON  
WEST BANK OF HOOGHLY RIVER

Location	Govt. Sponsored Colonies	Pre-1950 Squatters' Colonies	Post-1950 Squatters' Colonies
1	2	3	4
I - URBAN - Total (a+b)	13	2	32
a) MUNICIPALITIES :	7	2	24
1. Bansberia	1	-	-
2. Hooghly-Chinsurah	1	-	-
3. Baidyabati	1	-	-
4. Serampore	-	1	1
5. Belly	1	-	9
6. Howrah	2	1	13
7. Chandannagore Corporation	1	-	1
b) NON-MUNICIPAL URBAN UNITS :	6	-	8
8. Bally	1	-	5
9. Jagachha	3	-	5
10. Bauria	2	-	-
II - RURAL - Total (c)	34	2	4
c) POLICE STATIONS :	34	2	4
11. Chinsurah	12	-	1
12. Ehadreswar	6	-	-
13. Serampore	4	2	-
14. Uttarpara	3	-	2
15. Jagachha	3	-	-
16. Sankrail	2	-	-
17. Bally	1	-	1
18. Mogra	3	-	-
TOTAL (Urban + Rural)	47	4	36