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**SOCIO-ECONOMIC & POLITICAL IMPACT OF THE REFUGEE &  
MIGRATION PROBLEMS IN WEST BENGAL**

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**ABSTRACT**

West Bengal got the status of a State on 1st May 1960 and among the 28 States in India it occupies 13th position in terms of area having a total area of 88, 752 square kilometers and shares the 2.7% of India's total geographical area. West Bengal has national boundary with the States like Bihar, Jharkhand, Orissa, Sikkim and Assam; and has international boundary with three countries like Bangladesh, Bhutan and Nepal. As per the Census of 2001, in terms of population West Bengal occupies 4th place in India having a population of 8, 01, 76, 197 consisting of 4,14,65,985 males and 3,87,10,212 females. Among these total population 5, 77, 48, 946 live in the rural areas and 2, 24, 27, 251 live in the urban areas. West Bengal has the largest density of population in India as according to the Census of 2001, 904 persons per square kilometer live in West Bengal.

It has already been noted that only 8 lakh or 25% „Old Migrants“ took shelter in the Government relief camps and they were considered eligible for Government's assistance. And the „in-Between Migrants“ did not find place in the camps ran by the Government of West Bengal and thus were not considered competent for rehabilitation. Furthermore, the „New-Migrants“ were considered competent for rehabilitation if they were agreed to go outside West Bengal for rehabilitation and accordingly, they were left to their own fate. So, the refugees who did not take or find shelter in the Government camps or were not considered competent for rehabilitation or rehabilitation was conditional, tried to be resettled either by capturing the vacant land or abandoned barracks or houses. Some of them also took shelter in the rented house or built their new abodes along the railway tracks or along sides of the highways. All these people influenced the society, economy and polity of West Bengal to a great



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extent. Besides, the economic migrants from Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan have also left a considerable impact on the society, economy and polity of West Bengal. Furthermore, the impact of the inter-State migration on West Bengal especially in the economic field cannot be overlooked any way. They also took a considerable share of the State's employments by participating in the various fields and thus shrunk the opportunity of getting job for both the hosts and refugees. And according to the Census of 1961 during the decade 1951-61, a total of 374,000 migrants from other States came to West Bengal in search of jobs. As per the Census of 1951 out of the total population of West Bengal, 84.20 % persons speak in Bengali, 5.42% persons speak in Hindi, 3.21% persons speak in Santali, 0.61% persons speak in Oriya and remaining 6.56 persons speak in other languages. However, here the main emphasis will be on the refugees and migrants who were compelled, though the degree of compulsion varied, to take refuge into West Bengal and thus an attempt will be made to explore how these displaced persons influenced the society, economy and polity of West Bengal from 1947 to 2000.