

The Isolated Communities of South Asia: An Outcome of the Political Mapping from the Indian Subcontinent

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Introduction

Segmentation of different communities due to the new division at the end of the British Raj in the Indian subcontinent has created many marginalized communities. People left their homes in order to join the newly defined communities. On the other hand, there are quite a few cases where people did not leave and could not become part of the newly formed society and became marginalized. This segregation is in social acceptance as well as in occupation and in living quality. This paper examines the living conditions of segmented communities from the newly formed countries of the former British India and provides an overview on the situation. Since the pattern and politics of human settlement and the tangible-intangible character of any city/place is greatly influenced by the historical and contemporary experiences and norms of its users and society, therefore any major political or cultural shift is often translated and reflected in the built environment of the cities/places, leaving long or short term psychological and social impressions on the minds of their users, particularly and on societies generally. The study explores several aspects of marginalized and gated communities that require attention in order to achieve harmony in cities. The focus is limited to the living condition, occupation and related social aspects of the community.

Definition

'Migration is a spatial phenomenon. People move from one place to another, alone or together with others, for a short visit or for a long period of time, over a long or a short distance'. (Hammar, Brochmann, Tamas, & Faist, 1997). Here, present isolated communities are the ones who became isolated during several events namely, Pakistan and India division, Pakistan and Bangladesh division. The general types include the communities who had to leave their home and were forced to migrate to another destination or those who did not leave their home with others and ended up becoming sidelined. The groups also have one

common ground, they are known as Pakistanis among the communities although the reality may differ. The belief of Fainstein, that the urban policy should be dedicated to justice for all residents, especially low-income groups so that they integrate in the society and be supported by the privileged community is rather missing here (Fainstein, 2010). The condition of segmented communities is also not often thought about during city development processes. The political segmentation creates segmented cities within the city itself (Eyoh, 2014).

“Urbanism as a characteristic mode of life” has been defined in terms of three perspectives: “physical structure”, “system of social organization”, and “set of attitudes and ideas” (Wirth, 1938). This concept will be followed in this paper to elaborate the current condition of the mentioned groups. The concept of segregation may be found in different research work since 1920s (Vaughan. L, 2011). The question arises why such a topic requires attention? The communities and their integration in the society and living conditions are not similar to the rest of the communities of the cities. This separation is currently ongoing in Europe and several countries in Europe are facing issues in this matter. How to provide a placement for the asylum seeker, what are the facilities they can avail and how they will be integrated in the cities are burning questions (UNHCR subregional operations profile - Northern, Western, Central and Southern Europe, 2015). According to the Eurostat statistics report from July 2014 till June 2015, around 296,710 asylum seekers have submitted their applications in Germany (Asylum quarterly report, 2015). The idea of refugees was different during the 1947 and 1971 war in Indian subcontinent. In these cities, immigrants and minorities choose or insisted to live in localized clusters and also maintained a variety of social relationships to the intermediate neighborhood (Hillier & Vaughan, 2007). Such areas with proper economic activity with well integrated streets and spatial planning enables the social integration (Legeby, 2009). In a number of cities of the Indian subcontinent, architectural segregation has been present since the colonial period. The major cities had a significant segregation between the white and the native quarters and the space allocation was clear (King, 2010). A similar case may be compared in smaller scale in here presented gated communities who have been segregated due to racial and political (in) justice.

There is often public interest in removing the slums for further city development, which may not be seen in similar illegal settlements which may look visually pleasing. Spatial (in)justice may have various patterns which are among themselves just/unjust. It is not often difficult to understand this behavior by a careful observation (SOJA, 2009). Spatial remedies are necessary; often the spatial justice may not be addressed in a system, which is political, economic, social and itself unjust (Marcuse, 2009).

Segregated Communities

The city planning decisions often produce spatial, social and environmental segregations through ignoring the current contextual paradigms and conventional urban governance which reshapes the growth of informal urban settlements; economic and political benefits often overlook the necessary need of the people. Urban segregation in mega cities generates urban pockets that often show many distinctive features in those neighborhoods. Limited economic activities, cultural differences and political differences form inaccessible communities. This isolation causes a limited communal environment which also at times fosters sets of crimes and other unwanted occurrences.

Geneva Camp, Dhaka, Bangladesh

As part of the partition process in 1947, a large number of Muslim community from Bihar, West Bengal, Orissa and Uttar Pradesh migrated to former East-Pakistan which became Bangladesh in 1971 (Sholder, 2014). According to a PEW report, Bangladesh currently has 89.8% Muslim, 9.1% Hindu, 0.4% Buddhist, 0.4% folk religion, 0.2% Christian and less than 0.1% Jewish, other religions and those non-affiliated to religion (Global religious lanscape, 2010).



Figure 1a

Overview of Geneva Camp, Dhaka, Bangladesh. Photograph by Al-Abu Ahmed Ashraf-Dolon



Figure 1b

Overview of Geneva Camp, Dhaka, Bangladesh. Photograph by Al-Abu Ahmed Ashraf-Dolon

Figure 2a

Living conditions
in Geneva Camp.
Photograph by Al-
Abu Ahmed Ashraf-
Dolon

“The loss of East Pakistan not only meant a loss of people but it changed the nature of the state. East Bengal, though Pakistan’s poorest region, was home to a more moderate Islam” (Cohen, 2004). This, however, had greater aftereffect on Bangladesh. In Dhaka, the capital of Bangladesh, a large segmented community is present at Geneva Camp who are known as Bihari; the community is a distinct cultural linguistic group.



Figure 2b

Living conditions
in Geneva Camp.
Photograph by Al-
Abu Ahmed Ashraf-
Dolon

After the two nation division in 1947, this community remained as a different linguistic group in East Pakistan. After 1971, many took shelter in Geneva Camp and



currently the community consists of 250,000 people (World public library, 2015). This particular community is often addressed as Pakistani nationality living in Dhaka. The gated formation of a community is an expression of architected urban landscape which regulates the community and the architecture itself is also a form of regulation (Schindler, 2015). In 2008, the high court announced the camp dwellers as Bangladeshi citizens (Sholder, 2014). Urbanism plays an important role in terms of social organization which clearly may be observed here in the case study area (Wirth, 1938). The inhabitants of this community have limited place allocation for housing and mostly their work places are also inside or at the vicinity. The camp has an approximate area of 55,277 square meters which is divided into nine blocks (Sholder, 2014).

Hindu Camp, Lahore, Pakistan

The Hindu Camp community on Dev Samaj Road, Sanat Nagar (officially known as Sunnat Nagar), Lahore was born out of the womb of 1947’s partition of British India as the result of mass migration. The Hindu Camp community was and is neglected and sidelined by the government and state of Pakistan but is often exploited to feed the political motives of various stakeholders. The living conditions at the

Hindu Camp, a rendition of segregation revealed through its social life and built form, cannot be analyzed without investigating the origin and history of the area and its context, that is, the city of Lahore.

The diverse architectural and urban character of Lahore reflects upon its rich historical, cultural and political endeavors endured by the city and its people. The city of Lahore, currently the second largest metropolitan city of Pakistan, is facing several challenges of rapidly growing population and lack of adequate space for its residents; it has been the center of political, cultural and economic activities for centuries. The city flourished tremendously, especially during the Mughal and Sikh regime and emerged as the spectacular post-1857 accomplishment of the British Raj in terms of urban planning and development by expanding outside the Walled City of Lahore (Ahmed 2013).

Pre-partition Lahore had attracted and hosted communities encompassing diverse backgrounds in terms of region, religion and income class, generating a multi-cultural, ethnically diverse and tolerant society. A number of *Masjids*, *Gurdawaras*, *Ashrams* and *Mandirs*, roads, colleges and hospitals managed by and affiliated with the names of non-Muslims, the Muslim and non-Muslim neighbors peacefully residing next to each other were the physical manifestation and translation of the cultural diversity once encompassed and celebrated by the people and city of Lahore. The majority of the population of pre-partition Lahore was largely composed of Muslims; in 1941, the population of Lahore was 671,659, out of which 433,170 were Muslims and 238,484 were non-Muslims -- Hindu, Sikh, Christian and others (Sadullah 1993). However, the overwhelming bulk of real estate in the city was owned by Hindus (Ahmed 2004) while the Sikhs were an omnipresent community of the cityscape. The city, however, was divided along political and economic lines and the effects of such segregations may still be observed by analyzing the differences evident in the urban fabric of the Walled City, Cantonment and Model Town.

Since all the three communities, that is, Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs, amicably residing in the city of Lahore before the 1940s, had valid historical, cultural and emotional claims and ties associated with the city (Ahmed 2004), therefore, all the three groups fully participated and fell victim to the violence, atrocities, displacement and trauma prevalent before, during and after the partition of 1947.

The partition of the Indian subcontinent, often referred as the largest displacement of people in history (Fazila-Zamindar 2007) redefined the identity of Lahore from a multi-cultural society to a monotonous one. The post-partition Muslim monotony allowed the locals as well as the relocated influential Muslims to not only take charge of the political and economic arena but to also occupy and affiliate the properties and associations of Hindus, Sikhs and other non-Muslims with their names. Such trends may still be traced in the conversion and islamization of various roads, institutions and neighborhoods once associated with non-Muslims in Lahore specifically and all over Pakistan generally. Dayanand Vedic College (DAV) renamed as Islamia College, Sanat Nagar renamed as Sunnat Nagar and Krishan Nagar renamed as Islampura are few examples of areas and buildings affected by such trends of conversions in the vicinity of the Hindu Camp, Lahore.

During the partition, Lahore not only observed the migration of minorities from the east leaving their properties and belongings behind (Singh 1997) and their exodus into the west but also received large amount of Muslim refugees from the west. This influx and efflux of refugees disturbed the social and spatial organization of Lahore, resulting in urban congestion and chaos. A large number of refugees were accommodated into the urban fabric of Lahore by setting various refugee camps inside and outside the periphery of the city. The camps were either set up on the evacuee edifices and properties such as hostels, colleges, schools and *ashrams* (such as Amar Jain Hostel, Dev Samaj Girls Hostel, Mohial Ashram and Khalsa Hostel) or on vacant pieces of land, illustrating the vast parody of a city, occupied by an array of tents and shelters constructed from rags, bamboo and sheet metal (Alvi 2013) such as the Walton group of Camps, Lahore.

The government of the newly created state of Pakistan was unprepared to host such a large number of refugees as it failed to cater them in terms of accommodation, facilities and security. The Ministry of Refugee and Rehabilitation, formed in September 1947, made no significant efforts to delineate and implement long term rehabilitation policies or strategies for refugees for months following the partition of 1947, until Mian Iftikhar-uddin, as the Minister of Refugee and Rehabilitation, devised a radical land reform plan for refugee rehabilitation in 1949. The plan was however turn down by the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan which was dominated by landlords (Malik, 1971, 58-59).

The Muslim refugees, especially from low income class, who had migrated to Pakistan in hopes of a better future, home, identity and security, leaving behind all their valuable belongings, had to face the bitter reality of segregation, unemployment, lack of education and poor living standards at various refugee camps for years to come.

The post-partition resettlement pattern of refugees in Lahore particularly and all over Pakistan generally may be broadly categorized in terms of power and economics. The influential families were able to rehabilitate and resettle themselves in the existing structure of Lahore by either occupying or legally acquiring the evacuee land and properties, with or without the help of claim papers. Whereas, those without influences and resources weaved the process of their resettlement by adjusting in other remaining congested evacuee properties already flooded with refugees. Hindu Camp, Lahore is one example of various such evacuee neighborhoods in the shape of hostels, schools, *mandirs*, *ashrams* and houses on Dev Samaj Road, Sanat Nagar, Lahore.

Hindu Camp, DAV Hostels

The main building of Hindu Camp was first used for sheltering the refugees. The Hindu Camp on Court Street, Dev Samaj Road also comprises of a building originally dedicated to DAV School Boarding House, established in 1886 by DAV College Trust and Management Society in Lahore (Chopra 1997). The front façade of the main entrance containing the inscription of Dayanand Anglo Vedic Boarding School House and the hard black notice board fixed on the interior wall of the main building clearly narrates the pre-partition land use and function of the area now known as Hindu Camp.

The segregated community of Hindu Camp Lahore, comprising of the third generation of refugees residing in extremely poor conditions, is the finest example of the inevitable role and use of politics to reinforce urban divisions and economic inequality.



Figure 3a

Main entrance of DAV Hostels, Hindu Camp. Photograph by Mirza Hammad Hussain

Figure 3b

Jharoka on front facade, DAV Hostels, Hindu Camp. Photograph by Mirza Hammad Hussain

A built environment is often fabricated to restrict or enhance the community that fosters political goals (Vale, 1992). The Hindu Camp currently consists of two hostels namely DAV Hostel 1 and DAV Hostel 2, occupying an area of 23 *kanals*, 15 *marlas* and 34 *kanals* 5 *marlas* respectively. A total of 498 families were residing in Hindu Camp, as per the survey of 1992 conducted by Dr Arshad Mayo, Chairman Anjuman Ahliyan Dev Samaj Hostels and Mohliqa Abadiyan and approved by the Federal Government of Pakistan.

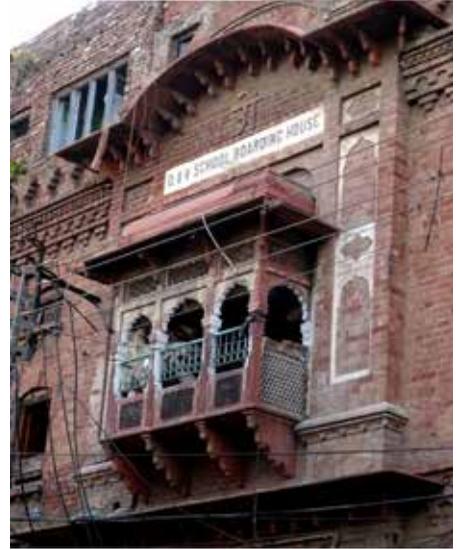


Table 1

Details of DAV Hostels. Source: Anjuman Ahliyan Dev Samaj Hostels and Mohliqa Abadiyan

Sr No	Name of Hostel	Property Number	Area	Unit
1	DAV Hostel 1 Court Street	SW-96-R-6	23 Kanal , 15 Marla	206
2	DAV Hostel 2 Court Street	SW-96-R-6	34 Kanal, 5 Marla	292

The residents of Hindu Camp faced the bitter reality of segregation, unemployment, lack of education and accommodation for many years until the Nawaz Shareef government (1990-1993) granted a 99 year lease to the occupants of the Camp. The grant of lease transformed the status of Hindu camp residents from occupants to tenants and disturbed the power equation between the residents of the camp and the Evacuee Trust Property Board (ETPB), a body established in 1960 responsible for looking after the affairs of properties and assets of minorities across the country. Political influences and high land value of the area engulfed by residents of the camp provoked the Evacuee Board authorities to decline the continuation of the lease agreement granted by the government of Pakistan in 1992. The notice released by the Evacuee Board in 2005, notifying the residents to evict the land owned by the Federal Government of Pakistan further complicated the relation between the governing body and those who are sidelined and

ignored. The positive role of Anjuman Ahliyan Dev Samaj Hostels and Mohliqa Abadiyan cannot be sidelined while delineating the resistance by the people when subjected to political and social oppressions implied by the responsible government authorities in segregating the community of Hindu Camp particularly and its adjacent evacuee properties generally.

The spatial shapes the social as much as the social shapes the spatial (Edward W. Soja 2009), therefore, the social inequality and its effect on the built environment of Hindu Camp was impressed from the unequal divisions and sub-divisions of land among the occupants of the camp on the basis of income groups and power structure together with incessant negligence from the concerned authorities in terms of maintenance. The shortage of space and resulting congestion allowed the people to renovate and amend the existing built fabric of Hindu Camp as per their need and capacity. Such initiatives have created a network of primary, secondary and tertiary pathways supporting the new encroachments - horizontally and vertically.



Figure 4a and 4b.

Horizontal and vertical expansion of the hostels.
Photograph by Mirza Hammad Hussain

Another example of spatial congestion and neglect of authorities is the courtyard of Hostel 2 of Hindu Camp which has been completely occupied and blocked by the adjacent new grey structure. The wide verandahs designed to function as horizontal circulation around the courtyard are blocked by new infrastructural developments from one side and compressed by the growing room sizes of occupants from another resulting in a narrow alley (Figure 5).

The residents of Hindu Camp are forced to incorporate toilets, kitchen and other facilities to serve a family unit in a room designed to serve either as a class room or bed room for 2-3 students. The unguided adaptive reuse of the buildings of Hindu Camp together with new infrastructural developments planned and implemented

Figure 5

Spatial congestion.
Photograph by Mirza
Hammad Hussain



by the community itself demonstrates the effect of social injustice, segregation and poor policy making on the built environment. The built environment has a significant influence: urban space can both reinforce and mitigate certain social outcomes (Legeby 2010). Lack of employment, education, security, access to recourses, clean water and sanitation are important issues generated due to the social and physical segregation of Hindu Camp community surrounded by civil courts, three government universities and other administrative departments established to serve the citizens of Pakistan.

The confused and chaotic architectural language of Hindu Camp is the juxtaposition of

- a) old school buildings constructed before partition
- b) amendments carried out within the existing structure of the schools during and after partition
- c) new structures introduced/built after partition

The community residing at Hindu Camp is not a distinct homogeneous community as it is composed of refugees who have migrated from different parts of east. They are nevertheless bonded together due to various factors such as religion, poverty and marginalized status. The role of Islam as a religion and the number of refugees settled in Hindu Camp have so far prevented the issue of identity crisis by encompassing the identities of refugees within the umbrella of Pakistani identity: an identity heavily dictated by the ideology of Pakistan. Therefore, the

residents of Hindu Camp are offended by the term refugee and stress on using the nomenclature of Pakistani for them.



Figure 6:
Juxtaposition of old and new/past and present. Photograph by Mirza Hammad Hussain

The differences in the concerns and interests of all stakeholders, that is, Hindu Camp community, ETPB, private organizations and related government bodies, is another major reason behind the rapidly deteriorating built environment and living conditions of Hindu Camp. The sense of belonging and ownership vital for the long term sustainability of any structure, space or area is gradually vanishing from the residents of the camp. The non-provision of ownership rights to properties managed and maintained by the residents of Hindu Camp even after 86 years of partition has inculcated a sense of insecurity and injustice. The new generation of residents/tenants is interested in leaving the camp to seek better and bright future rather than fighting the endless battle of property rights with the State. This has also encouraged many families to sell the possession not the property rights of the land allotted to them introducing the locals/foreigners to the social and physical fabric of the camp.

ETBP, on other hand, has completely failed as an organization in terms of developing the relationship of trust and coordination between the residents/tenants of Hindu Camp and the government of Pakistan. It has so far been unsuccessful in regulating and maintaining the buildings



Figure 7:
Communal activities in front of main gate, DAV Hostel, Hindu Camp. Photograph by Mirza Hammad Hussain

of Hindu Camp and its adjacent areas, few of which hold historical significance. It appears that high commercial value, corruption and other objectives accelerated by political influences overshadowed the genuine concerns and retaliation of Hindu Camp residents.

The positive role of Anjuman Ahliyan Dev Samaj Hostels and Mohliqa Abadiyan run by Dr. Arshad Mayo cannot be sidelined while delineating the resistance by the people when subjected to political and social oppressions implied by the responsible government authorities in segregating the community of Hindu camp particularly and its adjacent evacuee properties generally.

Pakistani Hindu Camp, Delhi

The Hindu migrants from current Pakistan migrated to different parts of India in 1947 due to the religious difference. Migration from another land and political tensions between the countries often create unfavorable condition for the migrants. Often the communities are under strict observation for security issues and relegated from the rest of the city inhabitants. On the other hand, in some groups, the resolution of redirecting traffic is to hinder harmful behaviors related to drugs and crime. The public is also involved in architectural barring in the way they project and place public transit and transportation setup (Schindler, 2015). The job facilities also are very limited for the inhabitants along with other facilities. This discrimination often sidelines them in economic and social terms from the rest of the city.

Currently, India has 14.4% Muslim, 79.5% Hindu, 0.8% Buddhist, 0.5% folk religion, 2.5% Christian, other religion 2.3 and less than 0.1% Jewish and non-affiliated to religion (Global religious lanscape, 2010). In Delhi, the capital of India, a similar camp existed which has been known as Pakistani Hindu Camp. As a matter of fact, a site survey was initiated in September, 2015 for this paper as journal references were not sufficient. The site survey in Jahangir Puri, Delhi indicated that the segmented community from the mentioned area mostly moved to Rajasthan, a neighboring province and a small community is currently living in Vasant Kunj, Delhi. After such experience and for safety reasons, the case study was not continued further to locate the inhabitants.

Conclusion

The discussion of segregated communities is not a simple issue where an easy solution can be found. It is not always easy to estimate what is happening there every day. Often these locations are not even safe to access by an outsider for research. The circumstances of the isolated groups under various political aspects make it more complicated. Such segregation often creates social as well as spatial injustice and an ugly, invisible and illegal urban space. The terms beautiful/ugly, visible/invisible, legal/illegal often determine the urban occupancy which may not be with proper definition in every case (Ghertner, 2008). A participatory approach in terms of design, policy making and its implementation involving all stake holders of Hindu Camp is required to address the complex social and built problems faced by the locality and its people. The government often isolates people in camps. This regulating and fostering of the political and spatial segregation is to exploit the users of the camps in order to fulfill their respective political objectives. This, however, creates special communal behavior which may indicate a risk factor for the city and society. For a just society and cities, segregated communities must not be sidelined but should be converted as an integral part of the developmental process. Segregation is not solely an injustice in itself but furthermore negatively influences democracy (Wiebelhaus-Brahm, 2010). There is often public interest in removing the slums for further city development, which may not be seen in similar illegal settlements that may look visually pleasing. Spatial (in)justice may have various patterns which are among themselves just/unjust. It is not often difficult to understand this behavior by a careful observation (SOJA, 2009). Spatial remedies are necessary; often the spatial justice may not be addressed in a system, political, economic, social and itself unjust (Marcuse, 2009). A proper integration of the marginalized community in the urban economy and urban society is recommended in order to prevent negative impacts in general. The condition can be hostile along with different illegal activities which can be reduced by regular monitoring done by the city governance and the inhabitants. Gated or segregated communities require proper blending with the rest of the urban dwellers for the betterment of the cities.

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