

THE BHUTANESE REFUGEE PROBLEM AND ITS IMPACT:

A CASE STUDY OF KHUDUNABARI REFUGEE CAMP

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RECOMMENDATION LETTER

This Thesis entitled “**The Bhutanese Refugee Problem and its Impact: A Case Study of Khudunabari Refugee Camp**” is prepared by Mr. Bhanu B. Sharma under my guidance and supervision in partial fulfillment for requirement of the Master Degree of Arts in Rural Development. He has successfully accomplished the Thesis. I have recommended this thesis for approval.

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APPROVAL LETTER

This is to certify that the thesis submitted by Mr. Bhanu B. Sharma entitled "**The Bhutanese Refugee Problem and its Impact: A Case Study of Khudunabari Refugee Camp**" has been approved by this department in the prescribed format of the faculty of the Humanities and Social Sciences.

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.....
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ABSTRACT

UNHCR's founding mandate defines refugees as persons who are outside their country and cannot return owing to a well-founded fear of persecution because of their race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership of a particular social group.

Every country in the world has been affected by a refugee crisis. States directly involved in war produce million of uprooted peoples in the last century alone. Other countries untouched by chaos themselves provide aid and shelter to the displaced. The roles have sometimes been reversed. Europe was flooded with refugees in the aftermath of two world wars, but later became a beacon of hope to other disenfranchised people.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, more than 100,000 Bhutanese were stripped of their nationality and forcibly expelled. Nearly one-sixth of Bhutan's population those of Nepali ethnicity was "ethnically cleansed" at that time, making Bhutan one of the highest per capita generators of refugees in the world. In 1993, Nepal and Bhutan had, in principle, agreed to categorize the Bhutanese refugees into four categories: genuine Bhutanese, Bhutanese who left the country willingly, Bhutanese with criminal backgrounds and non-Bhutanese. On December 22, 2003, the proposed terms of repatriation were made public and the results of the verification process of the Bhutanese refugees living in the Khudunabari camp (population 12,000) were published. In a highly flawed process, only 293 refugees were found to be bona fide Bhutanese citizens. At present over 106,000 Bhutanese refugees have been languishing in camps in Nepal. This problem has become one of the most protracted and neglected refugee crises.

Current high rate of population growth has meant increasing overcrowding of the refugees in the camps. Though a number of national and international relief organizations are involved in managing the camps, the refugees are subjected to various socio-economic, environmental, security and health problems. However, the problems are not limited within the refugee population; rather those are equally troublesome to the people of surrounding host communities as well. Since the establishment of refugee camps, the surrounding areas are affected from different aspects like environmental pollution, social crime, security, deforestation, etc. Nevertheless, the types of the problems and their extent, causes and consequences to the refugees and the host community sites are still yet to be explored, which are foremost essential as pre-requisites to design and implement appropriate intervention strategies.

International recognition of the urgency to find solutions has been mounting within the framework of Working Group on Resettlement. At present there is a basically harmonious position among donors that includes the strategic use of resettlement and the potential need to internationalize the issue should bilateral talks produce no tangible results, as resettlement opportunities would not be open indefinitely. Within the Bhutanese refugee community, a perceptible change has been noted of an increasing openness to other durable solutions in addition to repatriation. In discussions with the refugee community, some members did not exclude the possibility of resettlement.

ACRONYMS

AI	Amnesty International
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
AHURA	Association of Human Rights
AMDA	Association for Medical Doctors of Asia
BOG	Basic Operating Guidelines
BPP	Bhutan People's Party
BRAVVE	Bhutanese Refugees Aiding Victims of Violence
BRWF	Bhutanese Refugee Women's Forum
BREP	Bhutanese Refugee Education Program
BS	Bikram Sambat
BWO	Bhutan Women's Organization
CDO	Chief District Officer
CMC	Camp Member Committee
CPC	Child Play Centre
CVICT	Centre for Victims of Torture
CWT	Community Watch Team
GRINSO	Group of International Solidarity
IGO	Inspector General's Office
INHURED	International Human Rights, Environment and Development
IRCS	International Red Cross Society
JVT	Joint Verification Team
LWF	Lutheran World Federation
MJC	Ministerial Joint Committee
NAPE	New Approach Primary Education
NAM	Non-Aligned Movement
NBA	Nepal Bar Association
NEFA	North Eastern Frontier Agencies
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
NRCS	Nepal Red Cross Society
NUCRA	National Unit for Victims of Torture
Nu.	Ngultrum
OXFAM	Oxford for Famine Relief
PFHRB	People Forum for Human Rights in Bhutan
RBA	Royal Bhutan Army
RBP	Royal Bhutan Police
RCU	Refugee Coordination Unit
RGOB	Royal Government of Bhutan
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SCF	Save the Children Fund
SGBV	Sexual and Gender Based Violence
SOS	Save Our Soul
SUB	Student Union of Bhutan
UN	United Nation
UNHCR	United Nation High Commissioner for Refugee
UNICEF	United Nation International Children Emergency Fund
VDC	Village Development Committee
WFP	World Food Program

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