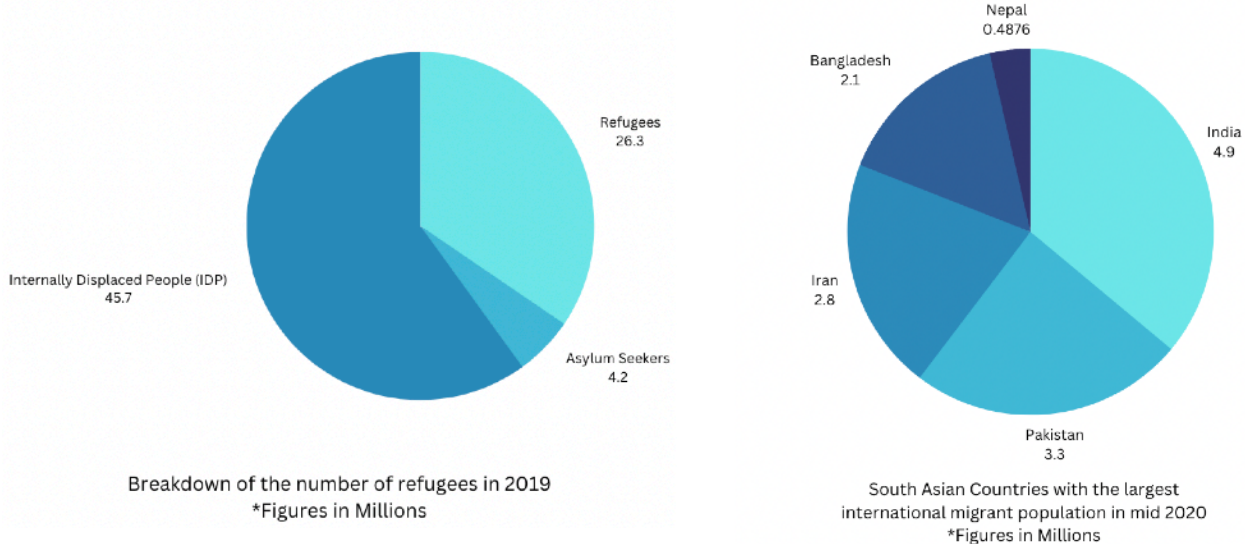


Lands, Borders and People: Asia Society India’s Series on Migration, Displacement and Refugees in South Asia, 2023

Introductory Remarks

Forced migration and refugee crises are not new phenomena, especially in South Asia, which has witnessed several moments of conflict and exile over the years. One of the biggest mass migrations in the world was the Partition of India and Pakistan in 1947. In recent years however, global focus on this issue has intensified, as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees ([UNHCR reported](#)) that by the end of 2019, there were 79.5 million forcibly displaced people worldwide -- the highest number ever recorded. As these numbers continue to grow, migration and displacement remains an international concern. South Asia alone hosted nearly 3.6 million refugees and asylum seekers in 2022, 58% of which were Internally Displaced People (IDPs).



Migration and displacement are a complex problem, causing a variety of fundamental alterations to the quality of life that displaced populations experience: from losses of livelihood, healthcare, and food security to erosion of human rights and statehood and limited access to safety and social acceptance.

In order to discuss the extent of this issue and raise awareness, Asia Society India Centre, in collaboration with The Azadi Project, organized a four-part series titled *Lands, Borders and People: Mobility, Displacement and Refugees in South Asia*, in June-July 2023. Over four

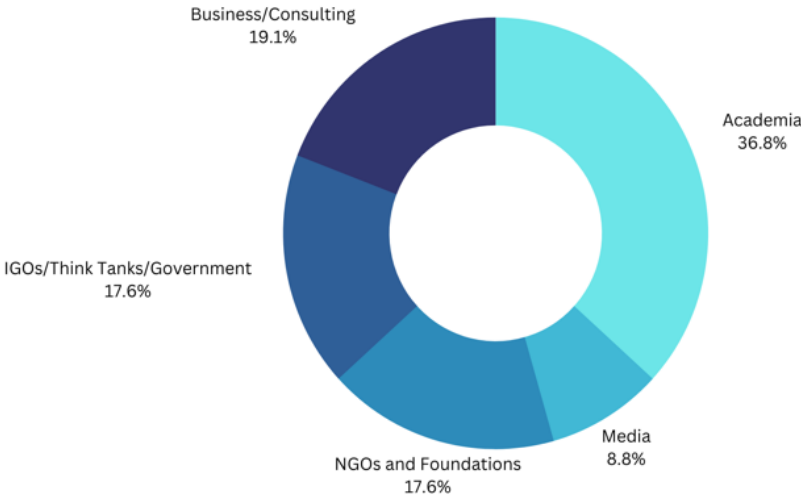
sessions, the series brought together first-person voices, academics, professionals, and advocates from various fields – policy, advocacy, journalism, and academia – to share their thoughts and perspectives in an open discussion. Each session focused on a specific sub-topic: international law and the politics of displacement; climate-induced migration; the role of host nations; and media narratives on displacement. The series was made possible with the support of The Chatterjee Group, which through its corporate social responsibility activities looks at education as a key focus area.

Public policy provides a framework for action, advocacy amplifies marginalized voices, journalism disseminates information, and academia offers research-based perspectives. With this series, our aim was to create a platform where experts from all these sectors could come together to exchange ideas, challenge existing convictions, and explore potential solutions. By facilitating cross-disciplinary dialogue, we aimed at unpacking the challenges of a migration crisis, and encouraging effective strategies and solutions.

The Audience

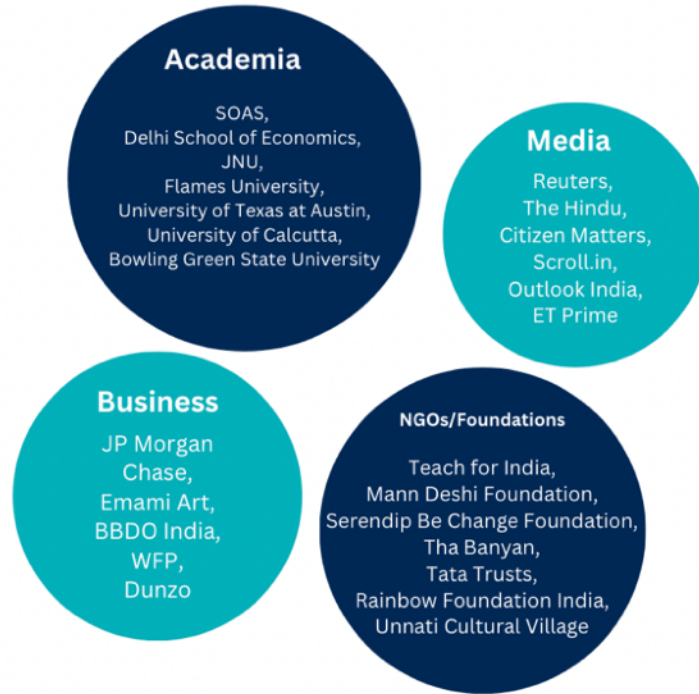
The series raised interest among a wide spectrum of participants spanning various backgrounds and interests, highlighting its far-reaching relevance. Audience members engaged actively with panelists, ensuring an engaging discussion touching upon various points of view on the issue at hand.

The initiative also transcended borders, bringing together individuals from around the world. This diversity in participation highlighted the initiative's aim to establish a platform for an open and well-rounded discussion.



Fields Represented by Audience

Some Organisations Represented by the Audience



Countries Represented by the Audience



Foreword

This year (2023) has seen heart-wrenching tragedies. Two boats carrying over 300 refugees sank in the Aegean Sea and the Bay of Bengal. At least 1200 refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants are stranded in the militarized zone between Tunisia and Libya and over a million have fled Sudan after the armed conflict began in the region in April 2023.

These tragedies are a reminder of the shared responsibility the world has towards people desperately seeking refuge from persecution. Globally, there are 35.3 million refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants (2022, UNHCR); a harsh reminder of the human toll exacted by the unyielding force of geopolitics, conflict, and environmental disasters. While the world grapples with these daunting numbers and the immediate crises; the future predictions give us little hope. Over one billion people are under threat of being displaced by 2050.

In the face of this, the need to understand the intricacies of displacement and migration becomes paramount. This need manifested itself through '*Lands, Borders, and People*' (LBP), an initiative by the Asia Society India Centre, developed in collaboration with The Azadi Project. The series cultivated a space where the various facets of displacement and migration were explored from diverse vantage points. Academics, journalists, philanthropists, and those displaced themselves shared space and conversations narrating their stories of resilience, compassion, and finding solutions for a way forward.

Lands, Borders and People focused on South Asia, where the complexities of displacement intertwine with cultural, geopolitical, and environmental dynamics unique to this region. It cast a spotlight on the nearly 250,000 refugees and asylum-seekers living in India, who come from Afghanistan, Myanmar, Tibet, Sri Lanka, and countries in Africa; the challenges they face in integrating with host communities and in accessing basic services. In my years of researching and writing about migration and refugees, I have noticed that when it comes to migration and asylum seekers, South Asia is often missing from the global discussion. But this region, especially when looked at through the prism of conflict, climate, and migration, is extremely significant on a global level. It is the most populous region in the world and has one-fourth of the global population. It is also a region that has unfortunately been rocked by conflict repeatedly and has the world's top climate displacement hotspots, all of this leading to mass-scale movement of people across borders.

As the chair for this series, I had the opportunity to engage and learn from speakers and experts across South Asia. The first chapter questioned if the countries in the subcontinent are prepared to handle displacement and migration in a manner that upholds people's rights. What legal frameworks are in place? Do the politics of the region, ethno-nationalism or anti-minority policies, affect the way countries receive and treat asylum-seekers? Chapter two deep-dived

into climate-induced migration and displacement. The discussion couldn't have been more relevant and timely as it was held as [cyclone Biparjoy](#) wreaked havoc in the region, temporarily displacing more than 180,000 people in the Indian state of Gujarat and Pakistan's neighboring Sindh province. The speakers who joined from different South Asian countries spoke about the need for local governments to work on adaptive and mitigative approaches. They also stressed on international and regional collaboration to raise awareness about climate change-induced displacement and work on solutions-based policy-making and journalism.

Chapter three looked at changing the negative narrative around refugees by highlighting the role that host nations can play in doing so. At a time when human capital is considered one of the biggest resources, should refugees be seen as an asset or liability by host nations? Should host nation policies facilitate the integration of refugees in a way that can turn refugees from an added cost to the nation to an asset that is beneficial to the economy of the country? An engaged panel and an equally engaged audience deliberated on these critical questions.

The last chapter of the series focused on media narratives on displacement, which is something I feel most passionately about. Human stories and the language we use is critical to ensure not just an empathetic public response but also responsible political and civil society engagement. Speakers and audience debated whether the media's role is not secondary but in fact primary in determining a social and policy response to migrants and refugees.

Lands, Borders, and People is not merely an intellectual pursuit, but a call to action. It is a response to the plea of the displaced. It confronts every viewer, listener and reader with the vital question of how we, as global citizens, can respond to the displaced and dispossessed. The Azadi Project stands as a testament to this ethos, working hand-in-hand with those who are driven from their homes. Collaborating with Asia Society, whose mission is to cultivate a nuanced understanding of modern South Asia, has been an honor. We believe that a shared and collaborative approach to addressing challenges and finding solutions together is the only way forward. As rightly pointed out by one of our speakers Professor Aqdas Afzal, "We want to work together...governments will come and go; we need people-to-people contact."

Priyali Sur
Founder and Executive Director
The Azadi Project

Chapter 1: International Law and Politics of Displacement

The inaugural session of the series examined the history of migration and displacement around the world. It analyzed the legal, policy-based and diplomatic issues involved in refugee protection. This analysis was explored within the contexts of the history and politics of present-day South Asia as the panel discussed the values and limitations of existing global frameworks pertaining to the region.

Jay Ramasubramanyam, an Assistant Professor (Teaching) in the Law & Society Program at York University, Toronto, provided a historical overview, highlighting India's role as a refuge for displaced individuals. He began by discussing the formulation of the [UN Convention on Refugees](#) in 1951. India and Pakistan, specifically, had voiced concerns about the definition of a 'refugee,' advocating for a broader interpretation of the term, internationally. However, their efforts to expand the scope of the definition to encompass those displaced by events like the Partition of India were not successful. This ultimately led to a disillusionment with the Convention and its vision. Jay brought attention to the post-Partition migration effects in South Asia that often escapes international attention. Additionally, Jay also touched upon the UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) and how it depends on member states to uphold the values and laws of the refugee convention. Due to this dependence, he also noted that the UNHCR is often weary of going against or overruling the jurisdiction of the state to help vulnerable communities. He added that this has led to a significant number of lapses and inconsistencies in the way refugee crises are addressed. Further, Jay commented on the lack of accountability due to blurred mandates and power dynamics between states.

Ujjaini Chatterji, a lawyer based in New Delhi working extensively on human rights and refugee protection for the women and children of the Rohingya Refugee community in India and Bangladesh as part of the Lawyers Collective, expanded on India's approach to refugee protection. Although India is not a signatory to the 1951 United Nations Convention on Refugees, India adheres to other relevant conventions, like the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). These offer provisions such as safeguarding the rights and well-being of asylum seekers and displaced individuals. It also ensures that they are not subjected to persecution or pushed back to dangerous situations.

Ali Johar, a Rohingya refugee human rights defender and statelessness activist, highlighted the Eurocentric nature of international refugee conventions. Most South Asian countries are not signatories or party to this convention, providing cause for concern over the protection of refugees. He noted that many South Asian nations cite this eurocentrism as a reason for their non-membership, justifying their inadequate refugee protection. Ali further mentioned, that

despite not having signed the 1951 convention or 1967 protocol, India is viewed as a safe haven for refugees, given its place on the executive committee of the UNHCR. He further delved into the lack of an effective refugee policy in South Asia and its effects, particularly in legal contexts. Ali expressed his concerns on the limited accountability on protection and access to legal aid – given the non-obligatory nature of the refugee convention in India.

“Though South Asian countries except Afghanistan did not sign the Refugee Convention, it is the regional phenomena of referring to this convention that is stopping refugees from receiving their deserved protection and dignity.”

- Ali Johar

The panel focused on the connections between historical legacies, international legal frameworks, and their real-world implications for displaced populations. It brought attention to the presence of protective laws and agreements globally, but also the gap in their implementation. One key issue is the UN refugee cards that fails to prevent detention. While these cards are intended to serve the purpose of identification and recognition for refugee populations, these cards often pose challenges in legal process that helps prevent detention due to their slow processing time. Refugees possessing these UN cards struggle to access rights due to complicated and strenuous protocols, initially designed to ensure responsible action. This brought up the question of the efficiency and validity of such cards and whether a more effective system is required to ensure the safety and rights of refugees.

“Institutions such as the UNHCR are still heavily dependent on states to be able to do their work effectively... what happens many times unfortunately is they tend to act according to the whims of massive states.”

- Jay Ramasubramanyam

Panel Recommendations:

- Amending state policies and creating laws to ensure fair and humane treatment of refugees, accounting for their rightful protection, and verifying/providing documentation to identify individuals and their reason for migration
- Ensuring and promoting community support and societal integration to provide refugees with an opportunity to restart their lives
- Creating frameworks to maintain institutional and state accountability in providing access to political and legal protection
- Strategically developing legal interventions and systems to protect refugee identity and destigmatizing refugee status, while also working towards integrations programs to ensure refugees are not sent back to unsafe and conflict-ridden zones

Listed below are readings and research conducted by the panelists on the values and limitations of the above mentioned legal frameworks and their implementation.

- Ramasubramanyam, Jay. 2023. Refugee protection in India and the country's relationship to the global refugee regime, Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung (The Federal Agency for Civic Education of Germany).
<https://www.bpb.de/themen/migration-integration/laenderprofile/english-version-country-profiles/518000/refugee-protection-in-india-and-the-country-s-relationship-to-the-global-refugee-regime/>
- Jay Ramasubramanyam, 'Regional Refugee Regimes: South Asia', in Cathryn Costello, Michelle Foster, and Jane McAdam (eds.), The Oxford Handbook of International Refugee Law (Oxford University Press, 2021).
- Chatterji, Ujjaini. "Field Notes- Rohingya's Made to Believe They Are Sub-Human." October 19, 2022.
<https://article-14.stck.me/post/46467/Field-Notes-Rohingyas-Made-To-Believe-They-Are-Sub-Human>

Chapter 2: Climate-Induced Migration

This chapter explored migration driven by climate change, with a focus on the South Asian context. The session was directed around the challenges of recognizing climate-induced displacement within international frameworks and political dynamics.

Dr. Aqdas Afzal, Assistant Professor of Social Development and Policy at Habib University, Pakistan, highlighted the absence of long-term planning and effective local governance in Pakistan's response to climate-related struggles. He emphasized the need for accountable and proactive local governments to deal with climate catastrophes. He also spoke of the limitations of the bureaucratic framework inherited from the colonial era, which was originally designed for maintaining law and order. He explained that this colonial era framework lacked the flexibility to address convoluted problems such as climate change.

“The government here has been completely occupied with Pakistan’s poly-crises ... so governments here are not focused on the long term and are mainly reactive.”

- Aqdas Afzal

Sanjay Vashist, Director of Climate Action Network South Asia, emphasized the importance of forums like the G20. He spoke about the role of these forums in working towards financing tools to address climate-induced loss, particularly in South Asia. By indicating that international law only outlined migration as a consequence of conflict, Sanjay explained the need to also explicitly outline climate induced migration, given that majority of global migration is caused due to environmental degradation. He highlighted the value of regional cooperation and data exchange for informed decision-making, and emphasized the recognition of climate refugees at a global level. He added that this would subsequently increase government attention at a regional and local level.

Stella Paul, Environment and Health Project Officer at Earth Journalism Network, emphasized media engagement and capacity building for accurate coverage of migration issues. She stressed the necessity for journalists to be well-versed with climate change and migration. Drawing from her experience as a climate refugee, Stella highlighted the challenges that come with the lack of early warning systems and effective local governance. Born into a community trapped between transboundary rivers, she vividly remembers the harrowing monsoons that forced families from

their homes. To further Sanjay Vashist's point on the need for climate financing, the argument of taxing developed countries for their role in causing an escalation of the climate crisis was brought up. Additionally, the panel discussed setting up local strategies to ensure emergency responses to climate disasters.

Dr Aqdas Afsal also spoke about how countries from the global south must also be granted concessions on international debt through organizations such as the IMF. Countries including Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Pakistan struggle to accumulate funds to invest in public building and infrastructure, as they default on payments. Stella added to this by talking about her own experiences of growing up in a flood-prone area with weak infrastructure. She cited her experience it to be her motivation behind her commitment to fostering awareness about migration issues through accurate media coverage and advocacy.

Stella further emphasized the need for capacity building and information exchanges among the media, inform them of stories that require international and political attention. By engaging in capacity building activities, journalists would be more aware, better prepared and better equipped to cover stories that are often overlooked or neglected. This would also foster a more inclusive, free, and collaborative media space, enabling journalists to go beyond political challenges and restrictions to share stories from around the world.

“The lack of capacity includes not only knowledge capacity, but also financial capacity, logistical capacity, technical capacity and when that is not sufficient enough, what happens is that the story is only half told.” - Stella Paul

The panel addressed the impact of the climate crisis on vulnerable populations faced with, or forced into, displacement, given the lack of recognition of climate-induced migration around the world. Having understood the need for better infrastructure and disaster preparedness policies as recommended by the panel, it is imperative to better understand the causes and effects of climate induced migration and what can be done to reduce it.

Panel Recommendations:

- Empowering and involving local communities in decision making processes
- Establishing resilient responsive action to climate disasters and subsequently climate induced migration

- Effective involvement of the media to cover and share stories and garner the right attention
- Enhancing the role of the international community in helping South Asian countries secure financing and resources for the people
- Creation of a special visa category for climate journalists to foster cross-border reporting
- Explicitly integrating climate-induced displacement into global political discussions and frameworks
- Improving regional collaboration in in policy making, journalism and disaster management for efficiency and prevention of climate catastrophes

To further explore climate-induced migration and necessary policy changes required to better respond to climate catastrophes, here is a list of readings.

- Jolly, Stellina, Nafees Ahmad, Stellina Jolly, and Nafees Ahmad. "Conceptualizing the climate change migration in South Asia." *Climate Refugees in South Asia: Protection Under International Legal Standards and State Practices in South Asia* (2019): 15-45. https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-981-13-3137-4_2
- Byravan, Sujatha, and Sudhir Chella Rajan. "The social impacts of climate change in South Asia." *Journal of Migration and Refugee Issues, The* 5, no. 3 (2009): 134-147. <https://search.informit.org/doi/abs/10.3316/INFORMIT.345884827079987>
- Sarker, Md Nazirul Islam. "Livelihood Resilience of Climate-Induced Displaced People in South Asia: Implications for Bangladesh." In *Disaster, Displacement and Resilient Livelihoods: Perspectives from South Asia*, pp. 81-98. Emerald Publishing Limited, 2023. <https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/978-1-80455-448-720231005/full/html>

Chapter 3: Role of Host Nations

This chapter brought attention to the role of host economies in accommodating refugees. It examined the complexities of how host nations view incoming refugees, usually as a liability. The discussion placed emphasis adopting a more inclusive perspective by viewing acknowledging the power of human capital and recognizing refugees as assets to an economy. This outlook could potentially shift refugees from being viewed as financial burdens to contributors to the host nation's economy.

“Refugees do not have to be helpless. If you empower them, and you skill them, and you accept them and treat them with dignity, they can be a catalyst for change in your country.”

- Poongkothai Chandrahasan

The discussion began by exploring the experiences of different refugee communities. Poongkothai Chandrahasan, Founder CEO of Serendip Be the Change Foundation, emphasized the vitality of community support, active governmental participation, and an openminded society to foster integration. Having worked extensively to ensure refugee integrations, as well as experiencing the challenges of migration first hand, Poongkothai shared her views on value of successful refugee integration and inclusion.

Rubana Huq, Vice-chancellor of Asian University, Bangladesh, highlighted challenges stemming from an influx of refugees, resulting in strained resources socio-economic concerns. She further indicated how education emerged as a foundation for refugee empowerment. It became a tool to smoothen their integration into host nations. Access to education further enables them to acquire linguistic and professional skills to better adapt to new surroundings, while acknowledging their own identities. The provision of these essential services is a key motivation for her work on making the academic sphere more inclusive for refugee children and students.

With recommendations from the panelists, the need for equipping refugees with the necessary skills, services and documentation was brought to light – indicating the role of host nations to be of significant impact of the rehabilitation of refugees and displaced persons.

Panel Recommendations:

In order to ensure complete and inclusive integration of refugees in host nations, the panel explored various suggestions and solutions that could be implemented, including:

- Unobstructed access to quality education to cultivate skills crossing borders
- Proactive engagement by certain regions in refugee integration through localized strategies rather than centralized systems
- Skill development and proper documentation
- The creation of a safe space by local authorities, giving refugees the freedom to uphold and express their true identity, without the fear of arbitrary arrests or discrimination

Listed below are some additional readings on refugee integration and rehabilitation, to further explore the role of host nations and how they can work towards more inclusive and progressive change.

- Khan, Fary, and Bhasker Amatya. "Refugee health and rehabilitation: Challenges and response." *Journal of rehabilitation medicine* 49, no. 5 (2017): 378-384. <https://medicaljournalssweden.se/jrm/article/view/10393>
- Das, Samir Kumar. *State response to the refugee crisis: relief and rehabilitation in the East*. New Delhi: Sage, 2003. https://www.google.co.in/books/edition/Refugees_and_the_State/HbASXfmbZ3sC?hl=en&gbpv=1&dq=south+asian+refugee+rehabilitation&pg=PA106&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q=south%20asian%20refugee%20rehabilitation&f=false
- Chatterji, Joya. "'Dispersal' and the failure of rehabilitation: refugee camp-dwellers and squatters in West Bengal." *Modern Asian Studies* 41, no. 5 (2007): 995-1032. <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/modern-asian-studies/article/abs/dispersal-and-the-failure-of-rehabilitation-refugee-campdwellers-and-squatters-in-west-bengal/75FD0BC7CA002B415E5E806120107E81>

Chapter 4: Media Narratives on Displacement

The final chapter addressed the media narratives surrounding migration and displacement. It focused on the relationship between media portrayals of refugee crises and public perception formed thereafter. The conversation stressed the need for journalism to transcend conventional boundaries and recognize migration as a multidimensional theme, requiring well-rounded reporting.

Preethi Nallu, Global Director at Report for the World, highlighted the complexities of a migration crisis. She brought attention to the various factors like labor policies and climate change, that influence a mass exodus. Preethi discussed the evolving semantics in shaping narratives on migration; often influenced by politics. She further recognized how this narrative shaping is a phenomenon in all parts of the world. She shared an example of the Indian "migrant workers" during the pandemic, revealing how political dynamics can influence classifications and the way in which stories are portrayed. She highlighted South Asia's diverse migrations, from rural-urban shifts to cross-border movements due to conflicts, climate, and economics. Preethi called for an intersectional approach, breaking down and reassessing how reports of migration crises are presented to the public.

“What I want to focus on is the semantics and the politics of how media shapes migration narratives across the globe and how its continuing to in different contexts over time.”

- Preethi Nallu

Sukhmani Khorana, Associate Professor at UNSW Sydney, emphasized complexities in the kind of vocabulary used by the media. She further discussed the interaction between policies and media discourses. She talked about the challenges in countering negative portrayals of refugees in conservative media and introduced the concept of peace journalism. Drawing attention to meaning, she highlighted that a lack of clarity in vocabulary influences the diverse interpretations generated by the public. Elaborating on the concept of peace journalism, she explained the need to go beyond focusing only on conflicting parties, but also considering the prelude and aftermath of conflicts in a solution-based report. Additionally, she highlighted the importance of "intersectionality," allowing for a more comprehensive and holistic exploration of the challenges faced by marginalized communities.

Pari Saikia, Human Rights Journalist, stressed the need for universal media ethics and responsible journalism. She emphasized distinctions between refugees, internally displaced people, and irregular migrants to promote sensitivity and accurate reporting. This distinction would also help authorities in determining what action must be taken to address arising refugee cases with an individualistic and efficient approach. Building trust with sources and transparent storytelling were highlighted as necessary practices, encouraging empathetic coverage. This has proven to help journalists tell stories that are respectful and accurate. She also said that being sensitive when talking about these issues is very important. Without sensitivity, stories could be misunderstood and could lead to the spread of misinformation.

The discussion revealed that media biases stemming from limited awareness of cultures can influence migration stories. Gaps in understanding ethnicities in certain regions contributed to narrative distortions. The discussion called for enhanced media practitioner awareness to mitigate these distortions.

Given the prevalent presence of various platforms to discuss global occurrences, the power of the media to shape narratives and public and political attention, can significantly support migrants and displaced individuals to receive necessary aid and quality of living.

Panel Recommendations:

- The adoption of an intersectional lens for reporting on migration
- Contextualizing stories within a broader spectrum of factors and avoiding a binary perspective
- Ethical considerations including respecting the confidentiality and vulnerabilities of marginalized sources while prioritizing the concept of "Informed consent" when engaging with marginalized subjects
- Establishing guidelines for ethical, accurate migration reporting
- Specialized reporting that acknowledges migration's nuances
- collaborative journalism to ensure stories from around the world, especially the Global South are covered
- Empowering displaced communities to share their narratives to garner the required international attention

Following are some readings to further understand migration, displacement, media coverage and public perception.

- Robinson, Piers. "The CNN effect revisited." *Critical studies in media communication* 22, no. 4 (2005): 344-349. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/07393180500288519>
- (2014) Khorana, Sukhmani. "From 'De-wogged' Migrants to 'Rabble Rousers': Mapping the Indian Diaspora in Australia", *Journal of Intercultural Studies* Vol. 35 No. 3, pp. 250-264.
- Ullah, AKM Ahsan, and Diotima Chatteraj. "Dispossession and Displacement: The Crisis and Media Influence." In *The Unheard Stories of the Rohingyas*, pp. 63-106. Bristol University Press, 2023. <https://bristoluniversitypressdigital.com/display/book/9781529231373/ch004.xml>

Key Learnings and Insights

The Lands, Borders, and People series provided a myriad of insights on the multifaceted nature of forced migration and displacement. Through in-depth discussions, real-world experiences, and interdisciplinary perspectives, the series presented several key learnings:

Understanding Legal Frameworks and Limitations: The series highlighted that despite the existence of international laws and agreements to protect refugees, the challenge lies in bridging the gap between these legal frameworks and their practical implementation. The panelists expressed concern over the inefficiency of international organizations to adequately provide protection to refugees. The discussion also covered the various inter-state and state-organization power dynamics influencing rapid action. The discussion highlighted the need for greater accountability among nations and organizations responsible for safeguarding the rights and dignity of refugees. This insight revealed the importance of creating mechanisms that ensure refugees receive fair and humane treatment. Further, the development of frameworks that incorporate the complexities of migration crises to existing international law were advised.

Importance of Regional Collaboration: A recurring theme throughout the series was the significance of regional collaboration in addressing forced migration challenges. South Asia, with its shared experiences and interconnected challenges, highlighted the necessity of a collaborative and regional approach. Experts emphasized the need for South-South cooperation, where countries facing similar challenges pool their efforts to build resilience, share best practices, and work towards comprehensive solutions. This emphasized the collective responsibility of nations to address migration issues beyond their borders.

Media's Role in Shaping Perceptions: The role of media emerged as a critical factor in shaping public perceptions of migration and displacement. The series recognized that media narratives have a profound impact on how the public understands and engages with these issues. Ethical reporting that contextualizes stories was pointed out to be an essential practice. The sessions also advocated for collaborative efforts between local and global media outlets to foster well-rounded and balanced coverage, giving voice to marginalized and displaced communities.

Community-Level Efforts for Refugees: A significant learning from the series was the pivotal role of community support in facilitating the integration of refugees. Case studies showcased the importance of strong community engagement, active governmental participation, and societal open-mindedness in fostering refugee inclusion. Education was identified as a foundational tool for refugee empowerment, providing them with the skills necessary for economic integration and social integration. This insight emphasized the power of localized efforts in creating meaningful change.

Multidimensional Responses to Displacement: The series encapsulated the intricate nature of displacement by delving into the legal, economic, social, and cultural aspects. By recognizing refugees not solely as beneficiaries of aid but as potential contributors to host economies, societies can foster a more inclusive and equitable environment. The speakers further advocated for an increase in collaboration between stakeholders to ensure the mitigation of future refugee crises and work effectively to ensure that states provide the necessary attention to existing cases of migration and displacement.

Future Conversations and Collaborations

As the series has brought attention to the complexities of this global phenomenon, it is crucial to maintain a forward-looking perspective even after its conclusion. Sustaining our focus on specific areas is paramount, while also acknowledging that the series could not cover every aspect of such a vast topic. Migration is a deeply intricate challenge, and our journey to fully grasp it is ongoing. This entails ongoing considerations in line with the discussions we've had.

- For instance, the gendered dynamics underlying conflict-induced displacement must be highlighted. It requires active and continued engagement with gender experts and advocates. The goal remains to comprehensively understand and address the unique vulnerabilities experienced by women and marginalized groups during an exodus of any kind.
- Equally important is the notion of direct interaction with refugees to capture their personal narratives. These insights, could significantly influence policy development and responses by prioritizing empathy and awareness. Parallely, we recognize that it is essential to sustain our exploration of economic resilience within vulnerable communities.
- Collaboration between economists, development practitioners, and local leaders is necessary to forge innovative frameworks for sustainable livelihoods. This holistic approach, intertwining livelihood generation and economic viability, must remain an ongoing endeavor.
- Expanding our focus to encompass lesser-known conflicts within the South Asian context also demands ongoing attention. The collaborative effort between media entities and scholarly researchers can shed light on these concealed displacement scenarios. By doing so, we can maintain a steady momentum in enhancing both scholarly discourse and public understanding.

In the midst of the various difficulties our world faces, this series has shown us the power of unity, understanding, and teamwork. The strong response to the series proved that there is potential for broader engagement. Governments, organizations, institutions, and individuals can all play a role in carrying forward these discussions and turning them into concrete actions. The lessons we've learned and the connections we've made can be the driving force for a safer and more empathetic future.

In closing, we extend a heartfelt invitation for your active participation in a collective journey that goes beyond mere discourse. Let's transform these insights into action, collaborate to bridge gaps, and channel our shared understanding into meaningful solutions. Your engagement plays a pivotal role in disseminating knowledge and driving meaningful change. Follow this link to view the recording of the panels: <https://shorturl.at/wyO19>

Recommended Readings

As we continue our exploration of the intricate landscapes of forced migration, displacement, and the global refugee crisis we recommend the following academic readings. These carefully curated works delve into the complexities of forced migration, offering insights and perspectives that contribute to a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by displaced individuals and communities. These recommended readings provide a gateway to a broader academic discourse, allowing us to continue our pursuit of knowledge, empathy, and meaningful action in the realm of forced migration and displacement.

UNHCR. (n.d.). Refugee Protection: A Guide to International Refugee Law (Handbook for Parliamentarians). Retrieved from <https://www.unhcr.org/media/refugee-protection-guide-international-refugee-law-handbook-parliamentarians>

Shanker, R. (2017, September 21). India's Refugee Asylum Practices: Rohingyas' Plight and the Legal Regime. The Wire. <https://thewire.in/law/india-refugee-asylum-practices-rohingya>

Ramasubramanyam, J. (2020). Subcontinental Defiance to the Global Refugee Regime: Global leadership or regional exceptionalism? Asian Yearbook of International Law, 24, 60-79. <https://www.rsc.ox.ac.uk/events/subcontinental-defiance-to-the-global-refugee-regime-global-leadership-or-regional-exceptionalism>

Naseem, N. (2022, October 14). A Balancing Act: Challenges to Pakistan's Refugee Management. South Asian Voices. <https://southasianvoices.org/a-balancing-act-challenges-to-pakistans-refugee-management/>

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