

## Situating Dalit in the History of Partition in Eastern India, 1946-64

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It is now widely recognized that the Partition of India was not just an event that happened in August 1947 – it had a long afterlife. And in exploring that aftermath of Partition, many voices have been recovered, yet many still remain silent. The Partition had unleashed unimaginable violence and triggered perhaps the greatest exodus of people in human history. Among those refugees were nearly two million *Dalit* or low-caste Hindu peasants who fled from East Pakistan to West Bengal between 1947 and 1964. As Partition historiography focuses almost exclusively on the Hindus and Sikhs on the one hand and the Muslims on the other, until now these low caste peasant refugees have remained almost totally excluded from the narratives of Partition. This paper is a work-in-progress report on a project that by using oral history methods and archival research seeks to unravel the place of the Dalit in the history of Partition in eastern India.

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