

**Sekhar Bandyopadhyay** is Emeritus Professor of History at Victoria University of Wellington in New Zealand, where he has been the founding Director of the New Zealand India Research Institute. He has also taught at the University of Calcutta and Kalyani University in India.



Educated at Presidency College and University of Calcutta, his primary research interest is in the history of nationalism and caste in colonial and postcolonial India. He is also interested in the history of Indian migration and the Indian diaspora. He has written six books, edited or co-edited twelve books, and published more than fifty book chapters and journal articles.

Some of his recent books are *From Plassey to Partition and After: A History of Modern India* (Second expanded edition, Orient BlackSwan, 2015); *Caste, Protest and Identity in Colonial India: The Namasudras of Bengal, 1872-1947* (Second expanded edition, OUP, 2011); *Decolonization in South Asia: Meanings of Freedom in Post-independence West Bengal* (Routledge, 2009); *Caste, Culture and Hegemony: Social Dominance in Colonial Bengal* (Sage, 2004). He has recently co-edited *Indians and the Antipodes: Networks, Boundaries and Circulation* (OUP, 2018); *Calcutta: The Stormy Decades* (Routledge, 2018); *Religion and Modernity in India* (OUP, 2016).

In 2014 for his book *Decolonization in South Asia* he was awarded the *Rabindra Puroskar* [Rabindranath Tagore Prize] by Government of West Bengal in India. Professor Bandyopadhyay is a Fellow of the Royal Society of New Zealand.

### Keynote Abstract

## **Partition and its Afterlife in South Asia: The Hazratbal riot of 1964** Sekhar Bandyopadhyay

The Partition of British India into two dominions – eventually two nation-states – of India and Pakistan on 14/15 August 1947 is a well discussed theme in South Asian historiography. Yet this ‘event’ had such a long preceding history of communal distrust and profound aftermath for the two successor nation-states that historians, literary scholars, filmmakers, and other social scientists are still trying to grapple with this continually unfolding historical process. It is commonly assumed that the decision to partition based on religious demography was to resolve once and for all the subcontinent’s minority problem. But this bureaucratic cartographic exercise that arbitrarily divided the territory into two states, did not solve the minority problem in South Asia. It created new minorities –about 42 million (later reduced to 35 million) Muslims in India and 20 million non-Muslims, primarily Hindus, in Pakistan. The destinies of the two minorities caught on the wrong sides of the border remained intertwined for many years. They were treated as ‘proxy citizens’ of an alien state and were treated as ‘hostages’ for the security of the minority on the other side of the border. Evidence of this could be seen in bouts of retributive communal violence and waves of mass migration that occurred at regular interval since Partition. This paper looks at this historical process through a close examination of the Hazratbal riot and the following mass migration into eastern India in 1964.