

The Socio-economic conditions of Indo-Bangla Enclaves

people

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In 21st century, when some people are doing their research about the Sun and its family, at the same time others are fighting about their basic needs and their identity. This paper tries to bring out the socio-economic situation of those people who have no identity or citizenship and live in enclaves.

Different people have different concepts about the "Chhit Mohal". It is a general question for the people "What is Chhit Mohal (enclaves) "? According to P.S. Roy (2011) 'Chhit' means separate and 'Mohal' means demarcated land. Joining the two words it becomes the 'separate land'. In political language chhit mohal means, the land of one country is surrounded by the area of another country. Like, some of land of India situated inside of the neighboring country Bangladesh that is called Indian chhit mohal. In English it is called Indian enclaves and similarly some pieces of land of Bangladesh are located inside India, are called Bangladesh chhit mohal (enclaves).

S. Naha (2011) has written in his article that total 223 enclaves are there in different countries of Asia.

Between India and Bangladesh the total number of enclaves are 162 (hundred sixty two). Among them 111 (hundred eleven) India enclaves are situated in Bangladesh and 51 (fifty one) Bangladesh enclaves are situated in India.

Historical Reasons for creation of enclaves

Most of the Bangladeshi enclaves are situated in the Cooch Behar district of West Bengal. There are some historical reasons behind the situation of all the Bangladeshi enclaves around the Cooch Behar district. With the passage of time, there have been various reasons for the creation of enclaves. Among them, there have been lots of wars followed by peace pacts between Koch kings and Mughal, Bhutanis. There have also been agreements between British Company and Koch King and relations between Bhutanees and English also contributed towards creation of enclaves.

H.N. Chowdhury (1st Pub. 1903) mentioned the seven tracts and chhitis in his book. These tracts are the Baishchala tracts consisting three talukes, Teldhar tracts forming twelve taluks, Patgram chhitis, Banshkta chhitis, the chhitis in pargana purvabhag, the chhitis in pargana Bhitardand and chhit Baralakuthi.

But among the various reasons for the creation of enclaves, the main reason was the

demarcation of two Bengals by Sir Radclif and his five members' team. The Bengal Boundary Commission headed by Sir Radclif submitted his final report on 17th August, 1947 where is five (5) taluks namely Patgram, Deviganje, Bonda, Pachagar and Telulia were incorporated with / given to East Pakistan. These taluks area earlier part of India situated in Jalpaiguri district. Out of these five Taluks, three tracts actually were situated in Jalpaiguri district. With the transfer of these three tracts, the small land holdings of the district of Cooch Behar also went to East Pakistan, thus creating Indian Enclave inside boundary of East Pakistan.

Out of hundred eleven (111) Indian enclaves, located in present Bangladesh, ninety seven (97) enclaves are actually located on these three tracts of Teldharan, Patgram and Bashkatan.

From the above table it can be seen that the total area of hundred eleven (111) Indian enclaves is 17158.13 acre where as the area of fourteen (14=111-97) enclaves is 2179.65 acre. This implies that if the above mentioned three tracts that mean 97 enclaves were not transferred from India to Bangladesh then the enclaves exchange problem would have been limited only to the 14 enclaves.

D. Chaki (2011) has written in his book that after thirteen years of separation of country, during one of the interview Sir Radclif said, " I was so queshet that I had not time to go into the details. Even accurate district maps were not there and what material there was. It was also inadequate. What could I do in one and a half months?"

No Freedom / Liberty to move around

The people of enclaves (162) are suffering miserably even today because of the above historical mistakes. Their socio-economic condition has deteriorated over the years.

To knowing the situation of enclaves' people, the researcher has gone to three Bangladeshi enclaves and interacts with the people of these enclaves. These are - Purba Bakalir chura, Pyatur Kuthi and Madhya Mashal Danga. These three are surrounded by the subdivision of Dinhatra in Cooch Behar district of West Bengal. The location of these three enclaves is very surprising, because these enclaves are surrounded by India like, an Island and the people of these enclaves call themselves in 'inhabitants of island'.

Their lifestyle is so pathetic that they have no freedom to go anywhere for their requirement. Even they can't go to outside from their area of enclaves to purchase their necessary goods for their daily life. Due to absence of identity, if they go out from their area, then there is a possibility of being caught by either police or B.S.F. of India. The policeman or B.S.F. will send them to Indian Jail due to illegal entry into India. After finishing the period of jail, B.S.F. pushback them to Bangladesh and after that B.D.R send them to Bangladesh Jail again because of their illegal entry into India. After completing the time period at Jail in Bangladesh they send them to their own enclaves which are a permanent kind of Jail to them.

Socio-Economic conditions

Besides the above problem, enclaves' people are facing lots of socio-economic problems

like education, health, basic infrastructure like electricity and road and also source of income.

Educational situation

In the enclaves there is no school facility. Most of the people are illiterate. If any parents want to give education to their children then it is very expensive for them because they have to send their children to Indian school by changing their address and father's name. This so called 'rented father's' demand lot of money for lending their name and address to the children. Thus they fall into this social evil trap for becoming educated.

It can be known from Annanda Bazar Patrika (18th April 2013) that nine members team, surveyed the condition of education of the people of 10 enclaves. They said that without any citizenship of a country as well as no birth certificate of people of enclaves it is not feasible to provide admission to any of the govt. authorization school. So they will be remained uneducated till to get citizenship.

Health condition

Due to non availability of government intervention there is no health facility in the enclaves. For medical treatment, they are dependent on Indian medical system. But there is always a fair of police or B.S.F. But for any emergency like pregnancy where modern medical facility is mandatory they go to Indian hospital for admission of those ladies but they fall into the social evil trap like changing the name of their husband and address and to borrow the rented husband otherwise hospital authority will not admit that lady. It creates a tout who charges high amount of money for giving them husband's name and address. If any lady denies to accept the other

husband's name then there is a uncertainty for their lives as well as their newly born baby and they divert themselves towards the traditional and unscientific treatment.

Condition of Social-Relation

For social customs like marriage, enclaves' people face lot of problems. It is very difficult to parents to get grooms and bride from outside of their enclaves for their daughters and sons respectively. If grooms get then they have to pay heavy dowry because nobody is interested to make a social relation with the enclaves where citizenship is not there. Due to this reason some times boys and girls come under compulsion to marry their relatives.

These are the exceptional cases which only face enclaves' people. Besides these, the problems are also there like infrastructural problem, economic problem etc.

Infrastructural condition

Certain facilities like electricity, roads etc. have been provided by the government of India for the Indian villages however these facilities have not been extended to the Bangladeshi enclaves. Though the electrical line and roads are passing through the Bangladeshi enclaves but the electrical connections and roads have not been given to the people of enclaves. So they are deprived form the infrastructural facilities.

Economic condition

They (enclaves' people) are economically backward also. Only agriculture is the source of income for them. Due to obstruction of coming out from their enclaves, they can't go outside for the purpose of earning lively hood. For agriculture they face various problems. Due to no-

governmental interference there is not market system. For buying fertilizer they pay high amount of money because of non-availability of Ration-Card. For selling agricultural product they only depend on neighboring country's village markets where they are cheated by middleman.

Due to non-enforcement of law and order, there is a more chance to do illegal activities by the people of enclaves as well as the people of neighboring villagers (having citizenship). The neighboring villagers purchase the land from enclaves' people at very low cost (land is transferred informally) and they cultivate illegal product which creates illegal market that actually is a disease for the society.

Due to non availability of banking system, the enclaves people fall in the trap of unauthorized chit-fund like 'Sarada' which make the poor people to poorer people.

Conclusion

To stop these illegal activities and for social upliftment of the enclaves people it is responsibility of both the countries to come forward and solve the problems. Although both the governments (Bangladesh and India) are trying to solve the problems by introducing different foreign policies

6th September 2011 Indian Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh and his Bangladesh counterpart Smt. Sheikh Hasina have signed a ten point agreement to strengthen the bilateral relations between the two countries. Among them one was demarcating land borders and another one related to exchange of enclaves. The agreement of enclaves deals with the status

of 111 (hundred eleven) Indian enclaves in Bangladesh, with a population of 37,334 (Frontline) and the area 17158.13 acres (above table) and 51 (fifty one) Bangladesh enclaves in India, with population of 14,215 (Frontline) and the area 7110.02 acres (above table). The agreement relating to exchange of enclaves has also been signed earlier in 1958 between the then Prime Minister Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru and Prime Minister Mr. Feroz Khan Noon. The framework agreement was aimed at exchange of enclaves. Indian enclaves located in East Pakistan and East Pakistan enclaves located in India.

Again in 1974 after the birth of Bangladesh in 1971, an agreement on the demarcation of the land boundary between India and Bangladesh and related matters was signed between then Indian Prime Minister Smt. Indira Gandhi and Bangladesh Prime Minister Mr. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and to state that in connection with the lease in perpetuity by India to Bangladesh of an area of approximately 178 meters x 85 meters near 'Tin Bigha' to connect Dahagram with Panbari Mouza (P.S. Patgram) of Bangladesh.

In 1982, the external affairs Minister of India Mr. P.V. Narasimha Rao and his Bangladeshi counterpart Mr. A.R. Shams-Ud-Doha signed the agreement on giving permanent access to Bangladeshis in 'Tin Bigha Koridor' consisting of 178X85 Sq. meter located in Mekhliganj subdivision of the district of Cooch Behar of West Bengal. Thus for the first time after 1947, the 'Tin Bigha' corridor has been kept open for the Bangladeshis.

In line with the agreement signed in Dhaka on 6th September, 2011 India has opened

the corridor, allowing 24-hour access for 16,000 Bangladeshis to the Dahagram - Angorpota enclaves.

The agreement signed in 1974 could help resolve only the problem of Dohagram and Angorpota but the problem of other enclaves continued to remain unresolved

Their situation can only be improved by giving them a citizenship of any country. The

word 'enclaves' is the 'curse' of their life. Both the countries should initiate positive steps for improving the situation of enclaves. It is the genuinely expected and hoped that in the 21st century period the people of enclaves should get the basic needs to lead a normal life. Thus there is a need to bring these people into the main stream of civilized society to prevent them from being marginalized.

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