

Prospects and Challenges of the Chitmahal Inhabitants in Cooch Behar District, W.B.

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Abstract

We are the inhabitants of the district Cooch Bihar and most of we are familiar about the term of Chitmahal. Here the Chitmahal refers the enclaves between India and Bangladesh. We can find this enclave at the border of Bangladesh and west Bengal, Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura also. The life of the inhabitants of this claves is very miserable. They are facing huge crisis of identity and they are depriving from all of their Human Rights. Both of the government of India and Bangladesh tried to solve this problem for several time. But ultimately they failed. As a result still the inhabitants of the Chitmahal is struggling. Through this journal we are going to discuss how the Chitmahal of the Cooch Behar District build up? And what Crisis they have to face in their daily life? We also want to give some advice to solve their Problem.

Introduction

According to P.S. Roy (2011) 'Chit' means separate and 'Mahal' means demarcated land. Joining the two words it becomes the 'separate land'. Between India and Bangladesh there have 162 enclaves. Among them 111 enclaves Indian enclaves situated in Bangladesh and 51 Bangladeshi Enclaves situated in Bangladesh. Most of the Bangladeshi Enclaves situated at Cooch Behar district, West Bengal. The life of the Enclaves was very miserable and they are still struggling for their Identity. To know their situation we went Bakalir chura, Pyatur Kuthi. After taking Interview and observing the situation we could be aware about their pathetic condition. We will discuss here everything. But it would be better to write about something how they came and settle there? Who are them? Then we will discuss

what problem they are facing now? And what can be done for their development?

Objective-

Through this study we are going to discuss:
How the Chitmahal of the Cooch Behar District build up?

What Crisis they have to face in their daily life?

Which kind of government measures were taken to solve the problem?

How the problem really can be solved?

Literature Review

The issue of Chitmahal is not new. From many years the inhabitants of these enclaves faced the problem. But unfortunately there is no plenty of study about this issue. But recently scholar started to give some attention on it. Whatever to write it, we have studied "The Cooch Bihar state and its land

revenue settlement” edited by Nripendranath Pal. From this literature we can know about the agreements which I have discussed below. We have studied Bratyajoner Britanta Sangha: Bharat Bangladesh Chit Mohol Written by D. Chaki. This is very useful to know the present condition and

problem of the inhabitants of the enclaves. We

Have studied also Chitmahal Somossa somporke kichu kotha written by P.S Roy which is very useful to know their problem and get some idea for solving this problem.

ENCLAVE IN COOCHBEHAR DISTRICT IN INDIA AND BANGLADESH (NEARBY COOCHBEHAR) NUMBER OF FAILY

| NAME OF POLICE STATION IN INDIA | NUMBER OF ENCLAVES | BANGLADESH POLICE STATION | NUMBER OF ENCLAVES |
|---------------------------------|--------------------|---|----------------------------|
| HALDIBARI | 40 | POCHAGOR DEBIGANJ, DIMLA, BODA, DEBIGANJ | 07 03 04 25 01 |
| MEKHLIGNJ, COOCH BEHAR | 33 | PATGRAM | 33 |
| MATHABHANGA | 22 | PATGRAM | 22 |
| SITALKUCHI | 02 | HATIBANDHA | 02 |
| DINHATA | 14 | LALMONIRHAT FULBARI KURIGRAM VURUNGABARI | 02 01 01 10 |
| TOTAL | 111 | TOTAL | 111 |

ENCLAVE IN BANGLADESH AND NUMBER OF FAILY

| DISTRICT OF BANGLADESH | NUMBER OF ENCLAVE | NUMBER OF FAMILY |
|------------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| PANCHGAR | 36 | 3830 |
| NILFAMARI | 04 | 119 |
| LALMONIRHAT | 59 | 2070 |
| KURIGRAM | 12 | 396 |
| TOTAL | 111 | 6145 |

Causes of the establishment of Chitmahal

- We all know about that the Princely state of Cooch Behar was ruled by Koch Royal Dynasty and during his long span they were involved Peace and war with neighbouring state like Bhutan and some time with Mughal also. The Fight against renounced Mughal General Mir Jumula and Sayista Khan is remarkable. It is hoped that during that time some Mahal was established.
- We are all known about the fact that during the time of partition India and Pakistan, the committee under the leadership of the Sir Radcliff was appointed. During this time The Bengal Boundary Commission headed by Sir Radcliff 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. As a matter of unfortunate that in this Process a small holding of Cooch Behar went to Eastern Pakistan. During that time lots of dissatisfaction arose against this faulty work of Sir Radclif. But Radclif told that he had very short time to manage all the things in a Proper manner. After the Bangladesh independence on 1971 now it is under the area of Bangladesh. But Bangladesh government did not accept their citizenship

Challenges of their life

They have no freedom to go outside from their enclaves for getting necessary facilities. If anyone try to enter into Indian area, and suddenly caught by BSF then they were sent to the Indian jail with the allegation of illegal entry to the Indian land.

Same incident is happened when they are trying to enter into Bangladesh Area. So, we can tell that they can't enjoy their basic democratic right to move.

They can't give the proper education facility to their children also. In their area there have no educational facilities such as school, college etc. So, if anyone wants to sent their child to school either in India or Bangladesh, then their journey start with the risk. After reaching there they have to face another Problem. They have to change their name, address everything. They have to make duplicate identity proof or sometime they have to arrange rented father. Both of this work is very risky, illegal and expensive bribe necessary. Naturally it is not possible for them and most of their child remains illiterate.

They also cannot get the minimum medical facilities at their due to the absence of hospital. So, naturally they treat themselves by using nominal ayurvedic method. But at critical condition when they urgently need modern medical treatment then they can't get it at their area and they want to go outside easily for getting the facilities.

- Necessary facilities like communication by road, Proper water system electricity are not their due to absence any kind of government.
- They have to face problem to establish social relationship with outsider. Specially in the case of marriage no outsider is willing to accept the daughter of this kind of family. If certainly anyone accept they demand for high amount of dowry.

- It can be heard from them that they have to face torturment from the security forces of both India and Bangladesh. They often took the advantage of their poor condition and some of the inhabitants of this Chitmahal tell that their daughter, sister wife's are not secured there.
- Due to their illiteracy they believe some superstition and narrow mentality which also create problem in their life.
- They are all belongs economically backward classes. They don't have any ration card that they can be benefited by this.
- Agriculture is their only sheltered but its scope is also limited.
- Due to the absence of law and order and their illiteracy they are cheated by others. Sometime to feed their family they sold their land with receiving very low cost.
- There have no banking system. So their money doesn't have any security and sometime they are cheated by non authorized section of people.
- They often become victimized by human trafficking system. They are provoked by a section of criminal to give better job in India or Bangladesh and dragged them into prostitution.

Government measures

- The first agreement between India and Bangladesh came into the stage under the rule of Indian President honorable Smt. Indira Gandhi. She made an agreement with the Prime minister of Bangladesh Mujhibur Rahaman. Under this agreement India retained the Berubari 12 enclaves. On the other hand Bangladesh retained Dahagrama.

It is called Tin Bigha Corridor. But due to the ratification Bangladesh India was also failed to solve the Problem.

- Finally the Tin Bigha corridor was leased to Bangladesh. But in this mater both government have to face many problem.
- The list of enclaves was prepared in 1997 by the two countries.
- Two Joint Boundary Working Groups were formed to work out the details of enclaves in 2001.

A joint census was carried out in May 2007. In September 2011, India signed the Additional Protocol for the 1974 Land Boundary Agreement with Bangladesh. Both nations announced an intention to swap 162 enclaves, giving residents a choice of nationality

On 6th June 2015, at the Present of honorable Prime minister of India Narendra Modi and honorable Prime minister, Sheikh Hasina an agreement was signed.

The enclaves were to be exchanged at midnight on 31 July 2015 and the boundary demarcation is to be completed by 30 June 2016 by Survey Departments of the respective countries. The transfer of enclave residents is expected to be completed by 30 November 2015

Through this agreement the citizen of enclaves were allowed to chose the citizenship of India or Bangladesh

Way for Solution

The problem only can be solved

The inhabitants of the Chitmahal can be absorbed by India or Bangladesh because through this absorption they will be able to

get the proper citizenship act. This citizenship act will enable them to provide all the democratic right, which now they can't enjoy.

* It can be possible by establishing peaceful mutual agreement in Between India and Bangladesh.

*By taking proper constitutional measure their right of equality, right of speech, right of freedom and the right of education should be granted.

* There should be good arrangements for their protection and judicial system that they cannot be oppressed by anyone.

* The system of schooling, housing, medical arrangements should be there that they can be secured.

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* Human Rights organization should be with them to solve their problem.

*The Proper rationing system would be there to solve their problem.

* The initiative of NGO is also important to solve their problem.

Conclusion

We are all known about that every human being are important resources for the world. Still through this problem a lot of human souls can't get any facility to become themselves good human resources. So in this movement I think this is the very important duty of the government of India and Bangladesh to take the responsibility of them and give them equal and fair chance of growth.