

Development Scenario in the Former Enclaves

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Abstract: *‘The Land Boundary Agreement (LBA)’ between Bangladesh and India is one of the biggest milestones of the history of bilateral relationships among the countries in the world. It took nearly seven decades to solve the border disputes between these two countries. In June 2015, the LBA agreement have been signed finally and the formalities of the agreement has been finished by 30 June 2016 by both of the countries. During, before, and after the agreement was taking place leaders from both countries made lots of promises as usually ignoring the challenges. In this current paper, I want to explain the current development scenario in those former enclaves based on those promises made before LBA signing.*

Introduction

Geography of India and Bangladesh has made destinies of these two countries more dependent on each other. When the British left in 1947 by partitioning the region into two countries and three areas (Hossain, 1981). That led to the biggest mess of the history of this region including the biggest migration and religious riots. In addition, they leave territorially one peculiar object, ‘enclave’ (Chhitmahal in Bengali) (Bhattacharya, 2017). The detailed explanation of this enclave will be discussed in the later parts of this paper.

Though, the enclaves left by the British has been exchanged through ‘The Land Boundary Agreement (LBA)’. Experts on Bangladesh-India bilateral relations considering this diplomatic success as ‘win-win’ including Dhaka and Delhi (India Times, 2015). This successful agreement has been a big success for both Awami League (AL) and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) lead governments. However, due to the geographical and political peculiarity of the region, those palaces remained backward and detached from the mainstream regions of the mainland country. Since June 2015, both countries have done the ratification of the agreement promised to develop the area.

Enclave between Bangladesh-India

There are different types of enclaves existing present day scenario. This paper will specifically discuss the territorial enclaves concerning India and Bangladesh. The enclave is the word came from the Latin word ‘inclavatus’ meaning, “shut-in, locked

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up” and ‘clavis’ meaning a “key.” In the definition of Vinokurov, Evgeny (2007), ‘enclave is a compact settlement that significantly differs from its surrounding area—nationally, politically, socio-culturally, or in some other way’ (Vinokurov, 2007). “From the point of view of the state in which it is located, is termed as an ‘enclave’ and the state to which it belongs to is an exclave” (Schendel, 2005).

Based on the report of Bangladesh-India Joint Field Inspection in 1996, Bangladesh gave back 51 enclaves and India gave back 111 enclaves. All those enclaves accommodated more than 52 thousand people. All these enclaves were not similar in nature. There were ‘2nd Order Enclave’ or ‘counter enclave’ means an enclave within an enclave. In addition, a 3rd Order Enclave’ or ‘counter-counter enclave’ means a Bangladeshi enclave surrounded by an Indian enclave, which itself surrounded by another Bangladeshi enclave (Bhattacharya, 2017).

All the Indian enclaves were located in the district of Coochbehar of West Bengal. On the other hand, the Bangladeshi enclaves were located in different districts of including Lalmonirhat – 59, Ponchogharh – 36, Kurigram– 12, and Nilphamari – 4 (ibid). A field survey among 197 enclave dwellers in Bangladesh part during 2010 by Ferdoush (2014) claimed that, to survive they need to cross the international borders of the two sovereign states. As Ferdoush said, “they live their life in ‘exile’” (Ferdoush, 2014).

Bilateral Relation between India-Bangladesh

Since the independence of Bangladesh and till date ‘Indo-Bangladesh Treaty of Friendship, Peace and Cooperation’ on 19 March 1972, is one of the most appreciated treaties concerning India and Bangladesh. Nevertheless, some political groups in Bangladesh have anti-Indian sentiment. They have termed the treaty as ‘Indian Exploitation’ (Hossain, 1981). Even before the independence and during the liberation war of Bangladesh, India helped with Army, taking 10-15 million refugees, providing training to the local forces (Mukti Bahani), providing support and shelter to the asylum government, and much more. It is now well documented and believed that without the help of India the Liberation of Bangladesh was near to impossible within this shortest possible time (Datta, 2016). Conversely, India was the first country to recognize Bangladesh as the independent sovereign country in the world (Bhari, 2015).

Nevertheless, this rapport didn’t last long after the Independence of Bangladesh. Just after the assassination of the Father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and the rise of the Military Dictator General Zia-Ur-Rahman, Bangladesh turned its ‘Secular’ image to an ‘Islamic’ one. Furthermore, anti-Indian sentiments become more popular with the political parties to gain power, remain popular, and attract vote (Ray, 2011).

Due to the military dictatorial rule from 1975 to 1991, and anti-Indian sentiment of the political leaders there was a gradual decline of the relation between India and Bangladesh. In addition, Islamic identity of Bangladesh gives this trend to a special dimension. Though, after the return of the democratic system in Bangladesh, there was the significant change in the relationship vis-à-vis two countries and their leaders. Despite this mood of ambivalence, in 1992 India granted Bangladesh the Tin Bigha Corridor¹ on perpetual lease. Likewise, noteworthy changes have taken place. In 1996 the daughter of the Father of the nation Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Sheikh Hasina came to power and signed bilateral Ganges Water Treaty (1996) and the Bangladesh Awami League Government's agreement with the Chakmas² (1998), with their subsequent repatriation from India, removed the two main irritants that had plagued Indo-Bangladeshi relations for years (Datta, 2016).

Nonetheless, in 2001, the wife of Military General and former President Zia-ur-Rahman, Mrs. Khaleda Zia lead Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and four-party alliance takes over former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. This four-party alliance has an image of pro-Islamic Bangladesh. This is why and the aftermath of 2001 election anti-Hindu violence, the corresponding influx of refugees into India, the overriding perception of security threats posed to India clouded the bilateral relations in this period (Ali, 2015).

In 2006 with the change of BNP lead Four Party Alliance Government to Care-Taker Government the relational ice began to melt again. It became more stabilized after the ninth Jatiya Sangsad (National Parliament) 2008 elections that brought power to Sheikh Hasina in Dhaka. She and her government addressed the core security concerns for India and sent a positive signal and that lead to the greater cooperation (Datta, 2016).

Literature Review

An article by Debarshi Bhattacharya argued there is no significant improvement has been done in the sector of health, sanitation, and education. In addition, the author portrayed that the former enclaves of India (now part of mainland Bangladesh) are way more developed and under government priority than that of Indian part (Bhattacharya, 2017). Another article by Md. Azmeary Ferdoush argued that the enclave areas are detached from the mainland and no citizen services are provided (Ferdoush, 2014).

After the LBA was signed, Prime Ministers of both countries promised to develop the area (Chatterjee, 2014; The Indian Express, 2015). As per the promises Bangladesh government provided electricity to the former enclave areas. In

¹ The Tin (or Teen) Bigha Corridor is a strip of land belonging to India on the West Bengal–Bangladesh border which, in September 2001, was leased to Bangladesh so that it can access its Dahagram–Angarpota enclaves.

² The Chakma, also known as the 'Daingnet' people, is an ethnic group concentrated in the Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh. Today, the geographic distribution of Chakmas is spread across Bangladesh and parts of northeastern India, western Burma, and diaspora communities in Yunnan Province, the United States, Canada, the UK, France, South Korea, Japan and Australia.

addition, now they have access to the modern day technology facilities (The Daily Prothom Alo, 2017). On the other hand, a report in Scroll.in (2018) claimed due to the difference of political ideology between Indian Central Government and State Government of West-Bengal, no significant improvement has been done in the former enclave areas of Bangladesh (Scroll.in, 2018). In this current paper, I will portray how far the development promises are kept in the former enclaves of both countries.

Theoretical Structure

There are different factors that influence the relations among nations. Kaarbo et al. stated that in international relations the factors for determining the relations among nations can be divided into two categories. They are inside of state and outside of the state (Kaarbo, Lantis, & Beasley, 2002). In this paper, the focus will be on both categories inside (citizens and groups within that system, the government organizations, and the individual leaders) and outside (international treaties, international organizations, international networks; international influences over countries and business communities) of states.

This study also focuses the idealist theory of state relations. It says ‘cooperation’ is possible and the main focus of the state is to the ‘welfare of the citizens’ of the country (Wilson, 2012). Some critics argue that the Idealist Approach holds that old, ineffective, and harmful modes of behavior. That is war, use of force, and violence should be abandoned and prefer new ways and means as determined by knowledge, reason, compassion, and self-restraint don’t work in the real world. In addition, the realists rely on self-help security systems.

In this case of Bangladesh-India Relations until now bilateral relations and the successful implementation of the LBA depended on the pragmatic idealist move of both actors. According to Couloumbis and Wolfe, “for the idealists, politics is the art of good government and not the art of possible. Politics provides for the good life and respect for his fellow humans, both domestically and internationally.” In addition, to ensure the human welfare, development and to end war and hostility to establish peace international law and order should be developed. In this current paper, there will be an attempt to evaluate the internal and external factors of international relations between India and Bangladesh from the perspective of LBA. The above discussion explains the successfulness of the LBA but after two years of the agreement how far the development promises are kept now it is time to measure that.

Research Methodology

For measuring the development indicators, I will compare the previous conditions and the present conditions of the infrastructures of the former enclaves. In addition, I will take consideration of the citizen services provided by the government authorities e.g. national identity, social-safety-net programs, electricity, etc.

Furthermore, the future prospects of the infrastructural developments will be taken consideration (e.g.- roads, schools, hospitals, etc.) in both countries' former enclaves.

This current paper is based on a secondary literature survey. It is a qualitative research in nature. During the research, I have extensively consulted various journals, periodicals, newspapers (English and Bengali), reference books, Govt. Reports, published articles, published reports of previous researchers, reports of electronic media, etc.

Hypothesis and Research Question

Most of the former enclave areas in both countries have remained underdeveloped because the development promises are never kept by the politicians. The main reason behind this delay is political culture. My research question is, what are the development promises were not kept in case of former enclave areas' infrastructural development?

India-Bangladesh Border Relation: History

After the independence, India becomes more conscious about its border issues. Since then this country has been tracking and defending its boundary and territory through political and military power. It has also signed different peace and friendship treaties among border sharing countries. Unlike others, Bangladesh has 4096.7 km of borderline with India. India first signed the border treaty with Bangladesh in 1974 then they signed a protocol for the treaty in 2011 and the ratification comes in 2015. There is a complicated history of determining of defining the boundary between countries that are not the subject of this current paper.

After the independence of Bangladesh Land Boundary Agreement (LBA), 1974 was signed by Indra Gandhi and Sheikh Mujibur Rahman to resolve the border problems between two countries. The major issues of LBA were exchange enclaves, adverse possessions of land, and settlement of 6.5 km of the un-demarcated land border (Chatterjee, 2014). Though, due to the political unrest until 1996 this issue remained undone. In April 1997, the list of enclaves, along with maps, was jointly reconciled, signed and exchanged about the two governments. In 2000, both government agreed to the issue of the establishment of Joint Boundary Working Group (JBWG) (Sikri, 2015). In 2001, the West Bengal Government gave Bangladesh Government the access to the Tin Bigha Corridor under the Lease Agreements of 1982 and 1992. In 2011, a protocol to 1974 LBA was signed in September 2011 during Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's visit to Dhaka. Conversely, Bangladesh Government ratified the protocol in 2013 but in the case of India, it took some time to form the new government. In May 2015 with the 100th amendment bill of the Indian constitution, LBA was adopted by the Indian parliament. This ratification of LBA becomes the game changer of India-Bangladesh relations (Bhardwaj, 2015).

Land Boundary Agreement: Description

With the LBA all kind of land boundary disputes has been resolved from the three sectors of India and Bangladesh (Bhardwaj, 2015). In addition, the adverse possessions by both countries also dissolved (GoI and GoB, 2011). The change in the political leadership and the parliamentary majority the signing of LBA was possible for this India had to approve 119th Constitutional Amendment Bill (Government of India, 2015). The beneficiary of the LBA is the 52 thousand people who were living 'exile' life (Bhattacharya, 2017). In this LBA deal, West Bengal Government has got 3000 million rupees from central government as rehabilitation package (Das, 2015). And the finance minister of Bangladesh has declared the 2000 million tk. will be allocated for the infrastructure development of the former enclaves.

Promises of the LBA

Since the Land Boundary Agreement was signed on 06 June 2015 the formalities of the agreement have to be completed by 30 June 2016. By 30 November 2015 the citizenship status of the residents, transfer of the residents, the legal exchange was completed. Furthermore, during the passage of the inhabitants of enclaves, the Indian government has provided a safe passage (India Times, 2015). The West Bengal State Government Promised 38 infrastructure projects and Central Government promised 3000 million rupees for the development of the former enclave areas. Likewise, Bangladesh government has promised to provide electricity to 14500 residents of 111 former enclaves in Bangladesh in 2015 (The Financial Express, 2015; The Indian Express, 2015). Moreover, the finance ministry of Bangladesh has allocated 2000 million tk. for the development of those former enclaves. Though, the problem is those areas have barely any facilities of electricity, education, and healthcare access, by either India or Bangladesh for the residents of those areas except for some basic structures (Datta, 2016).

Due to the lack of valid documentation and papers of the land, many acres of lands are being grabbed by the local land mafias (Rahman, 2015). In Banshpacha, Lalmonirhat district (Bangladesh), the people living in that area claimed that 160 acres out of the total 217 acres of land in the former enclave were in the illegal possession of 15 identified land grabbers (The Daily Star, 2015). On the other hand, those who went to Indian mainland they didn't get the proper price of their resources and now they are still living in the state provided housing. But they were promised their own land. In addition, the enumeration list was incomplete because of the incapacity of the concerned government institutions and there were some illegal migration cases were found (Ali, 2015; The Indian Express, 2015; The Hindu, 2015).

Likewise, the government packages were not clear for individual and family packages (Datta, 2016). Likewise, some dwellers haven't been able to sell their

lands due to the lack of formal papers. The whispers of political pressure to prevent migration, especially for Hindu families to India, are spreading (Bose, 2015). Residents have voiced fears of local bullying tactics by their neighbors in the face of relocation plans of some families.

Challenges

The major challenges were for successful LBA was, for India the two different ideological governments in Center and State and they have the clash of interest that lead to the broken development promises. On the other hand, Bangladesh had a stable government but due to the slow process of development project implementation lead to the delay of infrastructure development (Das, 2015). The former enclave areas are pure remote areas and fulfilling those high ambitious projects in a timely manner is near to impossible.

Besides, most of the political parties including Bharatiya Janata Party³, the Asom Gana Parishad⁴ and the Trinamool Congress⁵ were against the LBA during Congress regime (2011). However, assuming power BJP changed its stance on LBA and declared compensation package, for West Bengal state government (Sarkar, 2015).

On the other hand, there are challenges of ethnic conflicts. There have been records of violence against religious minorities in Bangladesh particularly ‘Hindus’. Besides, there are some pieces of evidence that claimed by Amnesty International, Hindus are being targeted only for their religion (Hindu America Foundation, 2014). It also shows the chronological decrease in numbers of Hindu population in Bangladesh. If this situation continues as a pro-Hindu country India might change their ‘vote of confidence’ on the Bangladesh government. Likewise, the fear of increasing Islamic Militancy in the Northeastern states of India can be a matter of distrust (Swaraj, 2015).

Nonetheless, the Indian central government allocated fund is not only for the rehabilitation of the people moving into India but also for some development projects in the enclaves. Nevertheless, the past records of project implementation by the government agencies are not ‘joyful’. Likewise, the Bangladeshi allocations are only for the development of the region and the risk remains the proper and timely implementation of the development projects (Mohan, 2015).

³ The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) (Indian People’s Party) is one of the two major political parties in India. As of 2015, it is the country's largest political party in terms of representation in the national parliament and state assemblies, and it is the world's largest party in terms of primary membership. The BJP is a right-wing party, with close ideological and organizational links to the Hindu nationalist Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh.

⁴ The Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) (Assam Peoples Association) is a state political party in Assam, India. The AGP was formed after the historic Assam Accord of 1985 when Prafulla Kumar Mahanta was elected as the youngest chief minister of the state.

⁵ The All India Trinamool Congress (abbreviated AITC, TMC or Trinamool Congress) is an Indian regional political party based in West Bengal. Founded on 1 January 1998 as a breakaway faction of the Indian National Congress, the party is led by its founder and current Chief Minister of West Bengal Mamata Banerjee. Prior to the 2014 general election it was the sixth largest party in the Lok Sabha with 19 seats; following that election, it is currently the fourth largest party in the Lok Sabha with 34 seats.

Against the expectations of around 13,000 people in 111 Indian enclaves moving into India, only 979 or 0.02 percent of the 37,000 dwellers in these enclaves inside Bangladesh plumped for Indian citizenship during the joint survey conducted by the two countries (Mohan, 2015).

Media has also pointed to a methodological hitch during the joint survey resulting in flawed results. A list of over 5500 people, who were left out of the purview of the survey, has been submitted to the State Government recently (Mohan, 2015). In this case, the government agencies should include the NGOs working in the former enclave areas for better coordination. There are few NGOs working in that area both in India and Bangladesh have to act on this issue to make the LBA successful and bring positive results.

How far the Promises are Kept

A recent study by Debarshi (2017) has compared the developments that took place in the former enclaves in both Bangladesh and India after surveying 989 persons from different ages, gender, religion, and area (Bhattacharya, 2017). In addition, a report from Daily Prothom Alo (a popular national daily in Bangladesh) claimed the dwellers of former enclaves of Bangladesh are excited about expected developments but there are frustrations in Indian part (The Daily Prothom Alo, 2017).

Both Bangladesh and India have provided Citizenship ID Card, Ration Card (both countries have different forms of cards), Job Cards to the former enclave dwellers. However, Bangladesh has established Schools and Madrasas in former enclaves but India is yet to establish any. In case of setting up of Boring Tube Well for providing safe water for drinking and water for agriculture, Bangladesh is quite advance but India is yet to start in its part. Bangladesh provides direct financial aid to the senior people, widow, and physically challenged people. On the other hand, India hasn't started any direct financial aid programs.

Educated young people are asking for quota for the jobs in different sectors since they had difficulties in studying, but no countries have initiated any such programs. Furthermore, Bangladesh has settled the land dispute issues but India is yet to resolve after two years and issue new papers. In case of roads infrastructure development, Bangladesh is yet to start constructing but they have marked and measured the roads. However, India is yet to complete the marking and measurements.

Similarly, India is yet to establish any healthcare facilities on its part however, Bangladesh has already established few health care centers and school for Physically Challenged Persons. Bangladesh government has provided free Latrines to its part but the Indian government is indifferent about providing any. Last but not the list, one thousand nine hundred families are brought under electricity facilities in

Bangladeshi part of the former enclaves and there is no such development on Indian part. As part of the 'Digital Bangladesh' government has established a digital center in different former enclaves where people can participate digital services provided by the government and private sectors.

Solutions

The entire rehabilitation work is going to be a long-drawn, complicated and humongous task, requiring intricate planning and execution. Both India and Bangladesh Governments must continue to show more of the pragmatism. That made the exchange of enclaves ultimately possible though it took 41 years for the two countries to complete the job of enclave exchange. It has much to do with the changes in Indo-Bangladesh ties over the years. This LBA is not the end of the relationship, this is just the beginning. People have congratulated for the success in the LBA but now it is government's task to provide facilities. To fulfill the promises following things can be done more.

- Now it is time to provide jobs to the dwellers of the former enclaves because they are way more underdeveloped than the mainland of the concerned country.
- Both countries should provide funds for the development projects of these areas because they are massively underdeveloped.
- NGO activities should be increased and regulated in these areas.
- Political leaders have always been afraid of the militancy development in these regions. Government authorities should also remember militancy is one of the outcomes of poverty.
- The people of these areas also need political empowerment and party patronization from the mainstream political parties.
- To remain up to date regularly survey should be conducted.

Opportunities

Since this paper has already mentioned these two countries share longest land boundary cooperation it is inevitable for development for both countries. In addition, after 45 years of independence of Bangladesh, with this LBA, these countries put one step forward to their bilateral relationship. Now the success of this agreement gives a lesson to the political leaders of these two countries. Now they realize that the bilateral relations and taking it as a hostage will not bring any benefit to the domestic policy. In addition, the current data shows that the Bangladesh government is providing enough support to develop the former enclaves compared to India. Indian government should also come forward to develop its area towards a balance development. There are some opportunities ahead of it and of course, these are depending on the successful implementation of the LBA development promises.

- India's security concern and assurance from Bangladesh is a big relief. Moreover, the commitments of Bangladesh were another step forward. And everything will depend on the balanced development efforts in the areas by the government.
- Successful implementation of the development projects in the former enclaves will help the people to integrate with the mainland communities.
- In addition, these promises will fix the fate of the future bigger projects jointly implemented by Bangladesh and India.

Conclusion

Both the governments of Bangladesh and India continued to show the pragmatism that made the exchange of enclaves ultimately possible though it took them 41 years to complete the job of enclave exchange has much to do with the changes in Bangladesh-India ties over the years (Mohan, 2015). This current paper showed what promises were made and how far the promises were kept and what to do for farther bigger cooperation between these two countries. However, to be precise, Bangladesh government is doing better than the Indian government in developing the former enclave areas. Additionally, this paper has provided an overview of what can be done to bring solutions moreover, some opportunities ahead and above all for the balanced development in those areas.

Besides, this exchange of enclaves among India and Bangladesh is another example of successful 'Idealist' politics of international actors. These types of land boundary disputes exist in many countries. They should take this case as an example and try to solve their own. On the other hand, since Bangladesh-India has reached to another stage of bilateral relationship they should take the advantage of it and bring out the most potential benefit for the citizens of the country. However, now it is important to provide balanced development in the former enclaves otherwise, all the success will have no meaning.

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