

INTRODUCTION:

The realist influence in the conceptualization of borders has always been blatantly evident given that borders have been primarily employed as state-controlled instruments of territoriality, physical markers of the area where a sovereign state exercises its authority over its subjects, has complete control over available resources and to conduct affairs as it sees fit. Border had essentially been a notion, an idea employed by the power elites in a given society to include/exclude subjects- the differentiation reinforced through legal, political, social and cultural practices in the everyday lives of citizens of a sovereign entity. However, a re-conceptualization of borders was brought on by a spatial shift in the discourse post the phenomenon of globalization as well as the end of Cold War. There was a marked departure from the statist tendencies in the discussion and borders are now reconsidered as dynamic social processes influenced by cultural norms and social realities in the region, processes that are in constant motion rather than being rigid lines on physical grounds. Such a shift in the conceptualization becomes all the more crucial in the context of South Asia where on one hand, the communities share a multitude of historical, social and cultural linkages while on the other hand, statist policies with regard to border management reflect severe cartographic anxiety, given their colonial past.

In this context, this paper attempts to explore how such a spatial shift in the idea of borders affects the ideas of identity, citizenship and belonging – particularly in the borderland between the sovereign states of India and Bangladesh. The paper begins with a detailed literature review dealing with the conceptual evolution of borders. The next section discusses how the notion of identity is impacted by such an evolution, and finally, the paper draws attention to Indo-Bangladesh borderland and some of the border management issues the region has been experiencing.

Conceptual evolution of borders:

Border studies, initially also known as limology, has evolved into a full-fledged interdisciplinary subject today- contributions from social science disciplines like political science, sociology, anthropology and such others- all carrying in their own interests and perspectives. However, the focus on borders as a phenomenon to study and analyze possibly started with geography, Kolossov

notes (2005). As he goes on to sketch out the development of border studies, it seems that the influence of political science started from the early 1970s as borders began playing an imperative role in international conflicts, primarily territorial disputes. The statist tendency in such an influence was very evident as borders referred to external state boundaries, markers of territory- a central feature of modern nation states. One of the key contributions to the notion of territory possibly comes from Robert Sack who describes it as ‘the key geographical component in understanding how society and space are interconnected.’ (Sack, 1986) According to him, territoriality is a spatial strategy employed by modern nation states to exert control over people and the society they constitute; hence it becomes a ‘geographical expansion of social power’ (Ibid). However, while the notion of territory undoubtedly holds extreme significance in the conceptualization of borders- particularly from traditional realist perspective, at the same time, the existing scholarship has failed to focus on a clear conceptualization of territory, and how it is any different from territoriality- the two terms often used interchangeably.

Traditional International Relations scholars, particularly those adhering to Classical Realism such as Sack, or John Agnew who note that “the territorial state acts as the geographical ‘container’ of modern society, that is, the boundaries of the state are also considered to be the boundaries of political and social processes” (Agnew, 1994). State borders are to limit not only sovereignty of the state, but also its subjects in order to emphasize a binary difference between ‘us’ and ‘them’. The state is the central focus of traditional IR and the other notions are understood in reference to state. In that sense, territory has primarily been understood not only as one of the central defining traits of the modern nation state but also a self-evident category, leading to noticeable gaps in conceptual clarity.

John H. Herz, on the territorial state and its evolution, notes that while territory has been a central factor when it comes to ‘marking out’ a nation-state, there have been uncertainties as to what

exactly defines the national interests that the state is supposed to serve and defend. A certain physical expanse on the earth is encircled by the state for its identification-its territoriality-which is supposedly secure from foreign penetration, makes it an unit of protection and giving the state not only its source of legitimacy over the population living within that territory but also its 'statehood' (Herz, 1957). This 'territorial instinct' to defend and protect is part and parcel of the territorial state, and has led to what John Agnew calls the 'territorial trap' (1994), a Realist tendency that has dominated the boundary discourse in International Relations.

Stuart Elden explores the emergence of territory as a concept and notes that physical territory and the control over it as a variety of spatial dimensions have consistently played a crucial role in the conduct of human affairs even in the early stages of modern society as we know it. While territorial disputes has received attention from scholars with regard to the development of International Relations- such as the post 1989 territorial changes in Central and Eastern Europe and the formation of new units in the wake of the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia, or the conflicts between Ethiopia and Eritrea, even the emergence of 'third world' independent sovereign units with the end of colonial expansionism, such developments have been studied in geographical contexts with territory being assumed as a self-evident term (Elden, 2013). Elden notes that the historical dimension of the term is neglected when territory is assumed to be a category understood as an outcome of state territoriality. On the other end, focusing on territory simply as a marker of modern state, a 'bounded space' or something that simply 'contains' the state, territory is taken to be simply existent, rather than pondering over the reasons of how the idea of this ownership over a certain geographical area came to occur. Eminent geographer David Harvey notes that the impact of geographical influences in the discussion of territory has also been a major factor in its conceptualization, a factor particularly significant in the context of borderland studies as borderlands became the sites for the production of geographical knowledge (Harvey, 2007).

Territory has been a major instrument employed by modern states to construct the intended image of a homogenous sovereign entity. In this regard, production of geographical knowledge in different institutional settings and the quality of such knowledges vary from one site to another, again impacting the conceptualization of territory. Given the impact of globalization as a phenomenon that has propelled the reconceptualization of boundaries and borders, it is important to note the dependence of globalization upon the accumulation of certain kinds of geographical knowledge and the evolution of geography as a distinctive way of knowing that permeates social thought and political practices. The state apparatus itself has become a primary site for the collection and analysis of geographical information. Harvey observes that geographers, while situating themselves within such frameworks of geographical knowledge production, may become tacit agents of state power without being conscious of it. Interests of particular states can even lead to the production of specific kinds of geographical knowledge that serves respective national interests (Ibid).

While the existing scholarship is yet to gain more conceptual clarity with regard to the notions of territory and territoriality, the contemporary discussions on borders locates a shift of attention away from the physical boundaries to social borders. Anssi Paasi in his writings points out the correlation between state and social borders. He argues that sovereignty is not exclusively the issue of statecraft; power elites in any given society play a crucial role in deciding how these borders will be drawn, where and in whose interest. His works also point out the arguments challenging the primacy of state territoriality as state borders often do not match with the 'real world' (Paasi, 2005). He highlights the contemporary scholarship that the world is increasingly being composed of relational networks, and not fixed spaces. The most noted scholar adhering to this body of thought would be Manuel Castells whose work promotes the world of network society replacing that of fixed spaces. In the post-globalization world, the development of communications and international trade actually leads creating borders even inside state territory-notional borders no longer exclusively defined by state. The contemporary scholarship, particularly adherents of the

constructivist school, challenges the 'territorial trap'- the fixed images of bordered nations and identities. Houtum and Kramsch (2005) observe that this paradigm shift was triggered by "key developments of world society, particularly as they relate to debates surrounding the post-Cold War world order, globalization and the end of the nation-state, cyberspace and associated time-space compressions" (2005). The end of cold war and the phenomenon of globalization demanded a significant shift in the nature and functioning of modern states-pushing them towards integration and co-operation, which means the boundary practices aimed at the rigid delimitation of sovereign entities had to evolve beyond to keep up with the demand of fluidity in International Relations.

One of the most noted paradigms in contemporary border studies is the Critical Border studies perspective that strives to focus on borders as something that is in the constant state of becoming. The Critical School stands in sharp contrast with the tradition of Classical Realism that dominated the border studies until globalization. According to this school, "the border is not something that straightforwardly presents itself in an unmediated way. It is never simply 'present', nor fully established, nor obviously accessible" (Parker & Vaughn-Williams, 2012). Along the same line of argument, scholars like Houtum and Geilis question the idea of border as a container of state. Instead, Critical Border Studies put forward the 'line in the sand' metaphor, trying to develop tools in order to bring: "a shift from the concept of the border to the notion of bordering practice; and the adoption of the lens of performance through which bordering practices are produced and reproduced" (Ibid). The focal point of the tradition is to perceive borders as something that is continuously in motion, not the static lines on map realists envision it to be. Paasi notes that "boundaries are simply part of the material and discursive practices/processes by which the territorialities of 'societies' are produced and reproduced, and here the state is still in a crucial position" (Paasi, 2005). The practice of bordering is one controlled by the state, and one aimed at marking difference- distinguishing 'self' from the

‘other’. The idea of bordering can be traced back to earlier discussions of borders needing to be reinforced through social practices and imaginations.

Borders in South Asia:

David Newman argues that borders are lines, in the sense that they constitute “the sharp point at which categories, spaces and territories interface, when the demarcation process of border is rigidly defined in strictly locational terms, that is, in physical sense” (Newman, 2006). However, this point of interface, on both sides of the physically border, actually can and indeed does comprise, significantly large territorial units- that is, the borderlands. Newman notes “It is an area within which people residing in the same territorial or cultural space may feel a sense of belonging to either one of the two sides, to each of the two sides, or even to a form of hybrid space in which they adopt parts of each culture and/or speak both languages” (Ibid). The contemporary scholarship seems to be in agreement that borderlands have become one of the ideal scenarios to study and analyze how borders can cut across societies, culture, ethnicities, or communities. As Willem Van Schendel argues, “borders do not demarcate difference, but often separate similarities as well” (Schendel, 2005).

Borderlands in South Asia are evident examples of the argument above. The primary difference in the conceptualization borders between the western and the non-western world is the idea of an ethnically homogeneous nation-state where the boundary poses a clear distinction between those who belong and those who do not. This tendency of imagining or characterizing a region in contrast with another also implies that the borders in the former were viewed by the same parameters that were prevalent in the latter, i.e. European bordering practices “...partly reflect the European tendency to contrast its own coherence with Asia’s dissonance, serving as yet another means of asserting the superiority of its own civilization... For instance, the Mandala states of South-east Asia being replaced with the hard boundaries characteristic of Westphalian sovereignty” (Iwashita

& Boyle, 2015), especially in its post-colonial phase. Borders in Asia arising out of interstate rivalries were in stark contrast with those of Europe in the sense, that according to the prevalent European scholarship, the Asian region earlier lacked the notion of a linear boundary-the states were not bounded by a marked line, rather the area controlled by one particular state would slowly pan outwards. This was in contrast to the modern notion of territory that Europe adhered to. A reference to borders emerging from “post-colonial space”, especially in Asia, are those born out of change or collapse in colonial empires, such as obvious ones being the British, the French and the Dutch empires from South and South-East Asia. The typology of ‘rediscovered spaces’ refers to those rediscovered or redrawn by the state due to changing geo-political conditions. However, these typologies can not be treated like water-tight compartments (Ibid).

In the specific case of South Asia, state borders on the other hand, struggle with what has become widely known as cartographic anxiety, Sankaran Krishna being one of the first scholars to discuss the same. Krishna refers to ‘cartography’ as the representational practices with regard to society, cultural and such other elements that go beyond the geographical mapping of a state, and render meaning to the idea of a ‘nation’- forming a link between the sovereign territory and the people that make it a nation. The struggle between the identity dimensions of a former colony and that of a newly formed state is manifested in an aggressive and violent nation-building processes (Krishna, 1994). The boundary lines that are drawn on the physical map, “geo-coding” as it is officially recognized, does not always reconcile with the ground reality-often turning borderlands into volatile conflict zones. James Scott, in his book ‘Seeing Like a State’ notes that this tendency by modern nation states to clearly projects where exactly one nation ends and another begins, is an embodiment of high-modernist tragedy. These arguments clearly portray the statist bias in conventional Border Studies that perceives nations as spatially contiguous entities, in keeping with the nationalist imagination. In post-colonial societies, the boundary lines drawn by the colonial

rulers are not in sync with the social history or cultural setting of that region, norms of spatial rationality overlooked as physical boundaries cut across social markers (Scott, 1998).

Like in the case of the Radcliffe Line in 1947, the boundary divided the region of Bengal on the basis of religion, leaving large numbers of both communities on either side of the boundary which in turn resulted in blurring the notions of inclusion and exclusion. In view of these ideas on border, one has to understand the manifestation of such aspects in Indo-Bangladesh Case. For instance, Van Schendel's extensive work on Indo-Bangladesh border notes that aggressive territoriality and its violent manifestations in border conflicts particularly impacts those who do not 'belong' with any particular nation-such as the enclave dwellers between India and Bangladesh, also leading to confusion regarding the notions of migration and citizenship (2005). Traces of such aggressive territoriality is further found across and throughout South-East Asia where imported bordering practices are applied in the newly independent, post-colonial setting-resulting in violent conflicts between the states and 'non-state' actors such guerrilla forces, often driven by ethnic or religious differences, coupled by competition over resources. The statist notions of sovereignty, citizenship and such other normative discourses with regard to border often not only challenge spatial practices but try to override their existence completely (Ibid).

Identity: interconnected with borders?

Identity is an extremely complex notion in itself. Not only it is dependent upon context, such as society, culture, religion, or even geography- but it also carries dimensional differences within the same context. An extensive study on the relation between the discourse of identity, the and borderlands as the production ground shows how identities are formed not only as relative to specific place or spaces, but also as against places/spaces – the process of Othering is a concrete example of such a construct (Hardwick & Mannesfield, 2009). Given how identities are deeply entrenched in everyday mundane consciousness, further part of social relations that we carry out

without quite thinking about it – social identity theories demand scholarly attention despite its fairly novel emergence that goes back to years as recent as 1950s. This school of thought essentially argues that the social category that one belongs to/feels at ease with can be used to define said person's identity, or at least a marker of it. An understanding of social identity discourses can be particularly instrumental in attempts at analysing how national identities take hold, especially when one follows renowned social identity theorist Burke's arguments wherein he considers identities to be primarily formed/re-shaped by relativity, that is, identities are viewed in context of relationships with others – located both inside and outside the social group in discussion (Burke & Reitzes, 1981). Similarly, theorists such as Stryker and Foote argue that the notion of identity essentially refers to the meanings that one attributes to self, primarily by means of social categories that they locate themselves in (Foote, 1951; Stryker, 1968). The scholarship further argues that identities are not ever-changing, but also symbolic – identities are defined through interactions, they are performative in nature (Bondi, 1993). The notion of identity in the context of borders become crucial, for 'borders can construct, challenge or even reaffirm national identity.' (Kaplan & Herb, 2011). Within the sovereign boundaries of a modern nation state, the population of that state has a specific identity-at least in the political sense, as Victor Konrad argues. Territory gives meaning to that identity. Any form of identity dependent upon that territorial image then also becomes unstable, if territory is not static itself. In view of the observation above, Kaplan and Herb note, "Without a stable boundary to demarcate a particular nation, national identity cannot really be conceived. Without the presence of a nationalist territorial ideology, national identities must always contend with their geographic manifestations." They also observe that "Landscapes often provide a visual trope that easily captures a nation's sense of itself. This is particularly important for those countries under subjection to other powers or which have recently gained independence" (Ibid). In sum, boundary provides a physical manifestation to the construct of a nation.

This observation becomes crucial in context of South Asia where the nation-states struggle with a colonial history. Barth argues for more emphasis on boundaries than on identity, since the classifications that identity is based on; actually mean the construction of boundaries. The state-centric system when it comes to regarding territories and boundaries around the modern nation-states follows the line of thinking that all individuals should belong to a nation, and all citizens of one such nation would have a nation identity in common. Along the same lines, Paasi (1998) goes on to argue against the dominant perception in traditional approaches that that bordered state sovereignties are the fulfilment of a historical destiny that they are meant to be where they are because history placed them there. John Agnew calls this 'supposed acceptance' of state and nation as categories that are taken for granted 'methodological nationalism' (Agnew, 1994). The concept of nationalism is widely employed as tool in the construction of identity in modern political societies, instrumentalized as a means of unification. In this context, Flynn argues (2006) that Nationalism and national identity can take one of two forms: civic or ethnic. He distinguishes between two forms of nationalism, that is, civic nationalism and ethnic nationalism. He observes, "civic nationalism is a form of nationalism in which citizens share a sense of allegiance to a common set of political institutions, normally, though not always, centered on the institutions of the state and its territorial boundaries" (Ibid). This allegiance is the focus of citizens' common political identity, binding them together by means of an appeal to what Jurgen Habermas calls 'constitutional patriotism' (Habermas, 1996). Nationalism as an ideology is an attempt at homogeneity by the state. Although civic nationalism is a specifically political form of identity, it may, over time, come to generate and become the focus of a stronger sense of common cultural identity. However, on the other hand, ethnic nationalism is essentially based on 'a sense of belonging' (Ibid). Flynn observes,

"The sense of common identity that ethnic nationalism brings can, like civic nationalism, be expressed through such things as a shared language, history, or set of political institutions. But unlike civic nationalism, it is often the case that only those who

are born into the group, or who are willing to fully assimilate to its cultural demands, can become full members of the ethnic nation. Thus, whereas civic nationalism seeks to build a common political identity that can be distinguished from citizens' more particular cultural or ethnic affiliations (or at least one that is not reducible to any one of them), ethnic nationalism presupposes no such distinction." (Flynn, 2006).

In a discussion on nation as a concept and its impact on border, David Kaplan and Guntram Herb in their article try to emphasize the impact of geography on the discourse of national identity - "nationalism is an intrinsically geographical doctrine in that it seeks to conjoin a self-identified group of people - a 'nation'- within a sovereign, bounded geographical area-a 'state'" (Kaplan & Herb, 2011). Their argument largely focuses on the concept of space implicit in any discussion on borderlands, pointing out that the kind of national identity portrayed at the geographic core of the state differs vastly from the one at the peripheries. Borderlands are spaces where states assert control in order to maintain sovereignty, often overlooking the people in the process, feeding into their insecurity (Ibid).

Echoing the observation above, Reece Jones argues that national identity might ever have different interpretations at different level-hence it might not always find a common ground . He picks up an example of "the term 'Bengali' that has held different meanings to people over its long history, from those who speak the Bengali language, to those who live in the region of West Bengal or the present-day State of Bangladesh, to an identity which either includes either Hindus, Muslims or both" (Jones, 2011). This becomes all the more complex in multicultural societies like India where homogeneity is a far more complex task to achieve as compared to the European societies.

Kaplan and Herb go on to argue that the line between national identity and regional identity often blurs as most of the modern nation-states "contain regions that at once

participate in a broader national identity while maintaining a distinct and perhaps even competing identity of their own” (2011). Scholars from the geographical perspective such as John Agnew and David Newman also emphasize the role of globalization and subsequent growth in communication network that has propelled a re-imagination of national identities as physical boundaries continue to erode. Mapping geographic space became important with regard to national identity as maps make the vision of the ‘nation’ tangible-something we can clearly see and work with. On the same note, Agnew points out the need to focus attention of the scholarship upon the multiplicity of identities that can exist - instead of focusing simply on the national character. The need to acknowledge these changes in the concepts of territoriality and identity becomes all the more pressing when we turn our attention to the multiplicity of categories within a certain nation-state that demand equal attention to their distinctiveness, disrupting the vision of a ‘homeland’. However, in the South Asian context, Dhananjay Tripathy notes (2015), “the borders have their own specific character, firmness and unaltered definition. Borders in South Asia are closed, heavily guarded and regarded as essential lines depicting nationalism”. The discourse of national identity also serves as a homogenizing project on the part of the state, and the most evident manifestation of it is found in the manner national borders are employed, to mark a difference between the ‘self’ and the ‘other’.

Despite the changing regional contexts, Critical Theory has been particularly useful in understanding the linkages between border and identity, in order to explore the formation of collective identity discourses such as the national identity, by exploring “how the national or ethnic bonds between citizen and community are formed, deepened, widened, or narrowed.” Ackleson argues (1999) that political boundaries are useful tools of analysis when it comes to understanding that how communities within a certain demarcated territory that is named one nation-state or the other, realize their differences from the rest that lies

outside their territory. This argument again highlights the binary construction of identity discourse that is carried out through borders.

The Indo-Bangladesh boundary and its conflicts:

The creation of the International Boundary between India and present Bangladesh (Known as East Pakistan before 1971) was the result of the Radcliffe Award through the partition of 1947. An analysis of the events that led to this event of Partition and the social calamities that ensued afterwards, explains how creation or recreation of borders, when carried out by purely political motivations, overlooks the social practices that contribute to the boundary making processes, and as a result, completely transforms the ideas of citizenship, migration and the notion of 'belonging'. It is often argued that the Radcliffe Award was purely an outcome of the motives of the British rule and how they wanted to divide the empire before finally handing over independence to the local people. But a careful study of the political scenario leading to the event of Partition and the consequences following thereafter, challenges the assumption that the drawing of the Radcliffe line was merely arbitrary. Joya Chatterjee notes that effects of partition on the province of Bengal, and India in general, reflects that borders indeed influence the shaping of the societies that they intend to demarcate (1999).

Reece Jones argues that despite all instances of communal/religious conflicts/binaries that followed Partition and continued thereafter, a new category of identity was formed after the 1971 birth of the State of Bangladesh. He observes, "Bangladesh's independence heralded a new paradigm for defining "national identity" in South Asia, which did not conform to either the pan-Indian identity category that included a mixture of languages, cultural practices and religions, or the Pakistani identity category that was defined only in terms of religion. Instead, it was an ethnically defined nationalism that based its legitimacy on what were described as the common Bengali linguistic and

cultural practices of the population, which transcended communal religious differences.” This was a massive point of departure from the pre-existing notion of identity, where religion had now been replaced by ethnicity. The sense of ‘belonging’ no longer rested with religion. Jones notes that not only this raised question of what would now keep other ethno-linguistic regions from demanding for a separate state, but also now that Bangladesh was now the land of ‘Bengalis’- how would the state of West Bengal now connect to this new state formed on the basis of this ethnic identity. Jones’ observation acknowledges the deeper complexities that notions of identity carry in terms of politics. The state borders acknowledges only the notion of national identity, affecting the processes of inclusion and exclusion in the process. However, such perspectives negate the other dimensions of social identity, such as religion or ethnicity, that most certainly contributes to the discourse of identity within the territory of state. The imposition of one identity dimension while completely overriding other dimensions leads to conflicts within the territory itself (Jones, 2011).

We can observe from demographic surveys and census that the evident bias in categorization of the population not only marginalizes the history of all other communities apart from Bengalis, but also reflects the nationalist perspective that is entrenched in the statist tradition of boundary drawing practices. The hasty drawing of the boundary resulted in unrealistic complexities where the political map of a region does not follow the physical landscape. This, till date, remains the sole reason of the unresolved border disputes between India and Bangladesh - not because the countries are not willing to resolve the issues, but because they are struggling to match reality with an imposed imagination of a border that was implemented by powers who are not part of the region at all. The result of ignoring the principle of spatial rationality turned out to be that the border essentially ran over social realities that were invalidated overnight, just because the State tuned a blind eye.

On the ground level, the Radcliffe line, for about 1000 kilometers, runs through water -making it impossible to pinpoint the exact location of the demarcating line, first between India and Pakistan, and then Bangladesh since its inception in 1971. In addition, the border also runs through active delta regions where river courses tend to be mobile, unsupervised land as well as moving islands-all these leading up to mapping errors, unnecessary border disputes and security issues. Disputed borders very obviously fail the very purpose of having a territory, that is, having a defined distinct geographical space- hence, the boundary between India and Bangladesh is a permanent source of contention. The partition was supposed to give shape to the two nations within the territory of British India. But the historical imagination of these two nations lacked a definite territorial shape. Hence, upon achieving conceptualization, neither of the two nation-states was completely satisfied. Homogenizing the periphery was one of the toughest tasks both nations faced, in turn, messing up the lives of the borderland communities even more. the boundary between India and Bangladesh runs longer than four thousand kilometres, along the states of Assam, Tripura, Meghalaya, Mizoram, and West Bengal. A large part of the boundary yet remains unfenced and often unguarded, due to lack of clear-cut demarcation as well as or geographical complexities, resulting in frequent disagreements. Studies note that there are long stretches of the boundary that yet require routinization, apart from certain volatile disputed points. The relationship between the two states, despite efforts from both sides, has remained vulnerable to an unstable boundary. For example, in 1999, India and Bangladesh agreed to set up a direct bus link between them, along with an agreement that would legitimately allow Indian goods to have access through and across Bangladeshi sovereign territory. However, an almost forgotten instance of arbitrary demarcation resulted in an unexpected altercation. A small river named Muhuri enters Eastern Bangladesh after flowing through Tripura which is an Indian state- there has been a minor dispute regarding the course of this river. However a 'chor' or a small piece of riverine island that surfaced around 1960 has been claimed to be occupied unlawfully by India. On 22nd August 1999, regarding this dispute,

there was a conflict between the border guards of the two states- leading to civilian casualties and another reinforcement of the boundary- effectively damaging the harmony in the process.

However, the most significant dispute between the two countries has been the Enclaves, which until 2015, was largest cluster of enclaves in the world, located between the independent states of India and Bangladesh. The enclaves that had long been a bone of contention between India and East Pakistan (Independent Bangladesh since 1974) had actually emerged out of the incompatible feudal system of the Princely state of Cooch Behar with the governance during Mughal era. But as the British came, and brought along with them the modern notions of territoriality and sovereignty-the enclaves still continued to exist as the British decided to ally with the Maharaja of Coochbihar, to avoid unnecessary confrontations. What needs to be pointed out at the outset is that the notion of enclaves is essentially borne out of the modern notion of territoriality and sovereignty. The control of the land was related with judicial power and tax authorities. Until the Partition in 1947, these pieces of lands were not considered a any threat or challenge. The enclaves were created along with the independent states of India and Pakistan.

The interruption in territorial contiguity was in contrast with the imagined rhetoric of homeland. In contrast to the Statist notions and practices on border, the people at periphery experience the

border in a different fashion. In fact, the complexities of territorial challenges manifested itself in the everyday experiences of the people living in the enclaves. In general, borderland communities experience borders in a more tangible manner in their everyday lives and their experiences which, in turn, shape bordering practices that goes on at the periphery. Enclave dwellers are in a deeper dilemma, for neither the host country nor their home country is responsible for them. The principles of citizenship are blurred here in the enclave, their rights suspended between the dimensions. Hosna J. Shewly reflected upon this trans-territorial status of the enclave dwellers. Hosna refers to trans-territoriality as being geographically located in one country but politically and legally belonging to another. The 'non-citizen' status of the enclave residents are at constant clash with the host country's different control mechanisms that are used to employ and maintain their sovereign status- the residents entering crossing the borders for the sake of economic survival committing an 'illegal' act, which in reality, is actually their victimization by territory control mechanisms (Shewly, 2015; Shewly, 2016).

Most of the literature that focuses on borderland communities reflects the lack of actualization, or peculiar manifestations of notions integral to modern nation-states, such as territory and citizenship. What sets enclave dwellers apart from other borderland communities is the lawlessness that is seen in these spaces. The State, as an authoritative entity, is absent here. Judicial and Executive duties that ensure citizenship in a society is either non-existent, or deliberately forgotten- making the enclave residents 'stateless'. In normal circumstances, a modern society draws its identity from its affiliation with the modern state. However this presence of state is lacking in the enclaves which costs the residents much more than a complicated form of citizenship, and it alters the nature of their existence. On the other end, Life in another border district of West Bengal, South Dinajpur that runs along almost fifty percent of

the boundary between India and Bangladesh is not as difficult as in the case of the former enclave residents, but the invisible border continues to cut across families, livelihoods, homes, and properties. Balurghat subdivision of South Dinajpur hosts the Hili border check post, and it is one of the districts, along with Cooch Bihar, most plagued by cross-border trafficking and illegal smuggling for it is located near the Zero line or the Radcliffe line. There are almost 70 homes near the Radcliffe line in the whole district of South Dinajpur, which ideally should not be inhabited by any kind of settlements - no man's yard. But almost 3/4th of the district falls into Bangladesh territory- resulting in a scenario where peoples' homes are situated right in the middle of the border. Even the most ordinary livelihood or social practices are in danger of being directly or indirectly conceived as security threats to the state. This has come to mean that peoples' lives here are highly monitored and regulated, disrupting the flow of living and presenting difficult socio-economic conditions.

Conclusion:

Borderlands, by the very nature of their location, suffer from consistent conflicts, whether such conflicts occur in the everyday experiences of borderland communities or in terms of the strategic management of the boundary that encases said borderland. While the dependence of modern states on the ideas of territory and sovereignty may not lessen any time soon, it is imperative that the State takes immediate and appropriate cognizance of the social realities going on at its peripheries, especially in regions like South Asia that can not be mapped adequately by euro-centric criterions, due to the diverse social and cultural markers South Asian states share between each other.

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