

FIGHTING FOR THE RIGHTS IN A CONTESTED SPACE

According to Article 15 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights- 'Everyone has the right to a nationality. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality, nor denied the right to change his nationality'. If everyone has the right to a nationality, then how is nationality to be ascribed to different people? What are the dividing factors? International law gives these rights to each State to determine its citizens. But what about the people living on the margins of disputed borderlands? India shares its disputed borders with Bangladesh and Pakistan. Bangladesh was carved out of the provinces of Bengal and Assam. The Radcliffe Commissions 'Blunder Line' holds the biggest dispute about the adversarial possessions of enclaves. The major bone of contention are the 106 enclaves (locally known as chits) of India having a total area of 20,957.07 acres situated within Bangladesh. Bangladesh also has 95 Chitmahals, with a total area of 12,289.37 acres of lands situated in the Indian territory.

As the dispute remains unresolved even after three decades of Independence of Bangladesh, the condition of the people living in these areas has deteriorated constantly. With no citizenship rights, locals are deprived of the basic human rights. As there is no law and order inhabitants of these 'chits' are living under constant threat.

This paper is an attempt to bring forward the basic challenges faced by the people living in these enclaves in their day-to-day life, without the basic rights. The elusiveness and neglect on the side of both the government has been able to worsen the issue further. It tries to figure out the major conflict people faces in being the 'no-where people'.