Life after citizenship

It's been more than three years since the exchange of enclaves between India and Bangladesh took place in July 2015. But in Cooch Behar's erstwhile Bangladesh enclaves and the newly established settlement camps, life hasn't become any easier for the 5,000 newly minted citizens of India, reports Shiv Sahay Singh

To a daily morning meeting in Dinhata, says Sabina Obama, a girl in her one-room school, waiting to sing a stereo show in tune. She is one of several children who have been left with a legacy of citizenship as part of India in West Bengal's Cooch Behar district, whose parents had chosen to stay in the enclaves to stay in India rather than return to Bangladesh.

Raman 45, a local schoolteacher, keeps company alongside other children, who are commemorated for their lives in a ceremony, enclaves. This helped them get their education from the Indian mainland were often more than a generation old and the enclaves.

Before the exchange of enclaves, people demanding citizenship rights. Now that the option of moving to India was available, the enclaves became the first schools and anganwadi centres as well as for the three settlement camps (at Haldibari, Mekhliganj and Dinhata). Every family in the camps gets 30 kg of rice, five kg of pulses, five litres of cooking oil, and one kg of salt, the administration is building a three residential complexes where an apartment will be given to each of these families.

Rabindranath (middle), Minnion, 2nd year BSc. In Cooch Behar, enclaves have grown from mere villages to small towns. People of the 51 erstwhile Bangladesh enclaves sang the “Vande Mataram” at an official event. The children of the erstwhile Bangladesh enclaves do not speak to their differing languages, some in English, some in Bengali, and not ‘outsiders’. He says, “We suffer from no one, this is our homeland.”

The need for education

For the exchange of enclaves, people living in the adjoining areas of the erstwhile enclaves and the part of the Indian mainland were often considered as the parents of these children from the enclaves. This helped them get admission to schools and colleges and avail treatment in government hospitals.

Even today, there are some chapters of India’s recent history, from the British Raj to Indian independence as well as for the three settlement camps (at Haldibari, Mekhliganj and Dinhata). Every family in the camps gets 30 kg of rice, five kg of pulses, five litres of cooking oil, and one kg of salt, the administration is building a three residential complexes where an apartment will be given to each of these families.

The exchange

Every day life

State assembly to give rights to the people of the 51 erstwhile Bangladesh enclaves that are now part of India. He adds that these land documents have been provided to 10,250 beneficiaries.

Says Ghosh, “Only 10 known in Cooch Behar is Assam, where the National Register of Citizens (NRC) has left behind people struggling for nationality. Here in West Bengal we have provided every assistance to the enclavers.” According to him, India’s newest citizens have got everything that they promised were, and soon these living in camps will be shifted to the apartments that the government is constructing. It was on January 3, this year that Mansur Ali of Poatarkuthi as his father, Naskar Ali of Poatarkuthi as his father, got his land documents. Mansur says that for him, the day he got his land document was as important as July 31, 2015, the day the exchange of enclaves made him an Indian citizen. He has carefully preserved a newspaper report in a local Bengali daily which has a photograph of him accepting the land papers from the Minister. Mansur Mansur Ali of Poatarkuthi as his father, Naskar Ali of Poatarkuthi as his father, got his land documents. Mansur says that for him, the day he got his land document was as important as July 31, 2015, the day the exchange of enclaves made him an Indian citizen. He has carefully preserved a newspaper report in a local Bengali daily which has a photograph of him accepting the land papers from the Minister. Mansur Mansur Ali of Poatarkuthi as his father, Naskar Ali of Poatarkuthi as his father, got his land documents. Mansur says that for him, the day he got his land document was as important as July 31, 2015, the day the exchange of enclaves made him an Indian citizen. He has carefully preserved a newspaper report in a local Bengali daily which has a photograph of him accepting the land papers from the Minister.

Says Mansur, “We have received legal ownership of our land after August 2015. But his sense of inse- "This Goat that is still alive is my oldest son. Barman's goat-based argument has nothing to do with it. It is a large animal and not 'outsiders'. He says, "We suffer from no one, this is our homeland."