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Assignment

ON Presence of Illegal Bangladeshi Immigrants: A Grave Threat to India's Internal Security Submitted By: Dhanya Babu 32712001 1st Year M. A Criminology

Introduction

The illegal immigrants from Bangladesh who are present in large numbers in India poses a grave threat to India's internal security. It is found that there are around 10-20 million illegal Bangladeshi migrants in India. Unchecked and unregulated migration flows together with high fertility rates could create an alarming situation. Though attempts have been made in India to prevent illegal migration, they have been relatively weak.

The 25-member committee, led by Bharatiya Janata Party leader Sushma Swaraj, took note of reports that counterfeit notes were in large circulation along the India-Bangladesh border and presence of illegal Bangladeshi immigrants in large numbers poses a grave threat to India's internal security and the government should take it seriously and strictly monitor their movement. It took cognisance of reports that illegal Bangladeshi migrants were able to secure ration cards, driving licences, voter identity cards and even PAN cards.

Media reports have attributed claims to the intelligence sources that terrorist groups have been recruiting Bangladeshis in India. It has also been reported that certain Bangladeshi insurgent groups were involved in the terrorist incidents in our country. Illegal Bangladeshi Migrants are also threat to

language and culture of Assam. ULFA which arose as a protest against Bangladeshis lost credibility only when its leaders took shelter in Bangladesh after the Bhutanese operation against the group in December 2003. Arrest of Bangladeshi national S.

M. Alam in January 2008 by Assam Police revealed ISI's plan to turn northeast into a volatile region. The migrants have also spread into other places like Dimapur and Kohima. The illegal migrants are not involved in terrorism in a big way, but involved in gun running, fake currency rackets and drug running etc. Illegal Immigration- Why and How? Growing population pressure in Bangladesh acts as a push factor whereas growing Indian economy, relatively less pressure on land and weak state resistance act as pull factor.

Islamic fundamentalist extremist groups are growing in Bangladesh and they are able to expand their activities in West Bengal as well. Some of such organizations are Jamaat-e-Islami-e-Hind, Jamaat-Ahle-Hadis, Students Islamic Organization (SIO), Students Islamic Movement of India (SIMI) and Tabligh-e-Jamat. Four of them are most active. Meetings have taken place between Jamaat-e-Islami and West Bengal based radical Muslim organizations and it is believed that ISI is behind them. There has been a growth of unauthorized, illegal madrassas all over West Bengal particularly along the Bangladesh border.

They are also using Kolkata and Agartala as bases being close to the border and people from both sides speak the same language. There are also groups which are directly involved in subversive activities such as HUJI. Siliguri town

acts as gateway to Guwahati, Gangtok and Kishengunj and also shares the border with Bangladesh, Bhutan and Nepal. Important highways, railways tracks, vital installations such as the airfields of Bagdogra and Hashimara and oil pipelines are located here. Increase in Muslim population in Siliguri and adjoining areas has grown at an astonishing 150% in the past seven years.

There are villages in and around Siliguri which have curious population mix and often act as heaven for ISI operatives. The villages have some 2, 000 Pashto and Baloch settlers from Afghanistan along with 6, 000 Iraninas. The increased activity of the ISI has endangered the security of the Siliguri corridor. ISI attempted sabotage in 1999 following a bomb blast at New Jalpaiguri Station. Steps Taken: To prevent the illegalimmigration, the Union Home Ministry has taken various measures like construction of border fencing, flood lighting and roads to enable more effective patrolling etc.

Assignment of border guarding duties on the Indo-Bangladesh border to a single force, Border Security Force, augmentation of its strength through additional battalions, reduction of gaps between border outposts, and provision of modern surveillance and other equipment and gadgetry to BSF are some other steps. The Home Ministry has also been issuing instructions to state governments and Union Territories from time to time to take sustained action to detect foreign nationals, including Bangladeshi nationals, staying illegally in the country.

As many as 32 Foreign Tribunals under the provisions of the Foreigners (Tribunals) Order, 1964, have also been constituted in Assam for detention of

illegal migrants and foreigners. The issue of illegal migrants from Bangladesh also figured prominently in the recent talks between the heads of Border Security Force and Bangladesh Rifles in Delhi. Steps Ought to be Taken: The following are some steps which can be taken to put an end to the illegal immigration in the country from Bangladesh. Diplomatic Effort – India has to make diplomatic effort to get Bangladesh to cooperate as illegal migration cannot be solved in an effective manner unless sending country cooperates. Sharing of digital database of its citizens will make it easier.

Financial Incentives:

India should think of offering illegal migrants financial incentives in the form of liberal trade regime, an infusion of aid and investment. * Coercive Diplomacy- The action of security forces should clearly convey to the illegal migrants that they would face greater danger if they try to cross the border. Better Border Management- Fencing, construction of border roads and proper management of border will make a difference Use better Indo-Bangladesh relations- Both the countries have better relations and both side should demarcate remaining 6.5 km of the border and the areas in adverse possession should be negotiated and form well defined border Unique Identification Number (UID) scheme – Compilation of data is likely to reduce the comfort level of fresh illegal migrants. Bar from Voting rights- Bangladeshi who are already in could be allowed to work but should not be allowed to vote and this will diminish their ability to influence government decisions by being a political force.

Conclusion

The illegal Bangladeshi migration was not the core focus of the government but it has been forced to take a close look at the problem as the terror incidents grew in intensity and frequency. India must go for better border management and effective record keeping of its nationals so that outsiders are easily identified and discouraged from infiltrating.