

BORDER HAAT: A STUDY ON THE INDO-BANGLADESH BORDER IN SOUTH TRIPURA

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Abstract: Border study has emerged to be a promising field of anthropological research in recent times. Apart from studying the cross-border communities and settlements, the border research encompasses exploration of economic exchanges taking place across the border. Haat or the traditional rural market located at the border area represents a rich site of anthropological investigation. The present paper is a documentation of the establishment and functioning of an Indo-Bangladesh border Haat located between Srinagar (South Tripura district, India) and Chhagalnaiya (Feni district, Bangladesh). It discusses the role of Border Haat and some social issues and problems.

The word *haat* is derived from the Sanskrit word *hatta*, which means a loud confused noise created by buyers and sellers in a village weekly market. The word *haat* indicates the many characteristics of a typical *haat*. A *haat* like a small fairground, a procession of human faces, a meeting place of various castes and occupational groups, an open commercial place, a meeting and interaction ground, which depicts the outline of a regional history, economy, culture, tradition, joy, happiness and crisis of the contemporary rural folk. It's like a mirror that reflects the picture of the society. Therefore, a *haat* is an integral part of rural society. Its presence is also found in riddles, proverbs, puzzles, folk drama and folk stories; it depicts the regional history, rituals, belief systems, religious texts, relations with folk deities, traditional beliefs and practices, *mantras* of traditional medicine men (for snake bite, black magic, etc.) and so on. Many writers have written about the different aspects of the *haat* in literature across many Indian languages. Folk and modern painters as well as singers have also depicted the *haat* from different perspectives. Therefore, *haats* are intimately associated with human society. *Haats* are not only places of economic transaction but have played a great role in the socio-economic and political spheres of rural people since time immemorial.

In olden times, weekly *haats* began on the banks of rivers or near water bodies for ease of transportation as well as a source of water. In most cases, there is no record of the established date and how it began. In many cases, villagers decide the place and market day as well as the time. However, in some cases, *zamindars* or rich families established a weekly market in rural areas for the welfare of the people. *Haats* are found in different geographical locations in India, i.e., from islands to highlands, desert to delta, *tarai* regions to coastal areas, plateau to peninsular regions, forest to fringe, and many other areas. However, a specific kind of *haat* is also

found in rural or fringe areas for the sale and purchase of specialized commodities or animals, like vegetables, paddy, betel leaf, handloom cloth, mat, earthen pots, cattle including cows, sheep, goats, poultry birds, etc. The name of the *haat* may be associated with many things like the name of the locality or village, market day, Hindu deities, *zaminder*'s name or his surname, main commodities of the market, etc. After independence, many *haats* have been established in different corners of India due to increase in the population, demand of commodities and development of communication as well other infrastructural facilities.

Since the independence of India, a lot of attention is paid towards the international boundaries for national security, illegal trading and migration. The Indo-Bangladesh border is the longest international boundary in South Asia. It is 4096 kilometres long, linking six divisions of Bangladesh with five states of India, and with only eight immigration check posts on both sides of the international boundary till 2009. Although Bangladeshis have their national identity within a nation-state framework, they identify themselves as Bengalis and share a common ethno-cultural ethos and heritage with Bengalis in India across the border. They consist of Muslim migrants and Hindu refugees, both of whom have different reasons to migrate. In general, migrants continue to nurture this network in their home country. According to a UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs report, India was ranked ninth in terms of the number of international migrants (5,436,012 migrants in 2010) and accounted for 2.5 per cent of all international migrants. Illegal migration from Bangladesh to India leads to problems and poses multi-layered threats to the Indian state. A diverse range of commodities pass through the international boundary at all hours, some visible and others obscured from public gaze.

India has been a sought-after destination by immigrants from neighbouring countries. For reasons of national security, the Indian government erected fencing on the India-Bangladesh border and established many government offices, departments and check posts at different locations to regulate the activities of illegal traders, antisocial and commoners. The construction of Indo-Bangladesh fencing activity was started during 2005 in the Bilonia area of South Tripura district. However, many sections of the border still remain unfenced due to two major natural causes: the course of the Muhuri river, and human habitation. Both single and double-barbed fencing has been erected.

This stretch of the border is at once home to a heterogeneous mosaic of communities interconnected through kinship, fairs, festivals, cultural activities and trade. According to government reports and earlier studies, a large population migrated from Bangladesh to different bordering districts of West Bengal and Tripura both before and after the partition in 1971 (Bagchi and Duary, 2016). Therefore, migrants to India still have some emotional ties with Bangladesh. The border hinders poor migrants from visiting Bangladesh for general and socio-

economic purposes. This results in unlawful cross-border activities. Then, it was thought to legalize *Border Haat*, initiated by the governments of both countries, to curb illegal activities and widen the scope of cultural interaction.

There are many publications on sociological and human relation studies in academic journals, magazines, books and reports on border issues in Indo-Bangladesh, Indo-Nepal, Indo- China, Indo-Pakistan like Behera(2011), Banerjee et.al.(1999), Chatterji(2013), Das(1995), Das(2006), Hussian(2013), Jamwal(2004), Pramanik(2006), Sur(2014), Van(2005), World Bank(20006) and so on. Many publications are there on weekly market or traditional village *haat* like Duary (2016), Sinha, et.al (1961), Sinha (1968) and many others. However, there is no specific study has been made on *Border Haat* in India. Therefore, there is a lot of scope to study *Border Haat* in any branch of social sciences, economics and international relation in general and anthropological study in particular.

Objectives of the study

1. To know the background of the Srinagar–Chhagalnaiya border *haat*.
2. To know the organizational and operational mechanism of *border haat*.
3. To know the role of a *border haat*.
4. To know the problems and prospects of a *border haat*.

Methodology

All standard anthropological tools and techniques, particularly observation and interview methods, were used in the primary data collection at the Srinagar border *haat* and its neighbouring areas through fieldwork. Some data collected from secondary sources from district and block levels in the respective areas. The researchers visited the *haat* at its inauguration on 13 January 2015, later on 21st and 28 July, and 4th and 11 August 2015.

It was very difficult to collect data during market time due to time constraint and all the people being very busy – from administration to security, customs to police, venders to vendors and visitors to guests. As a common protected international marketplace controlled by the administration of both the countries, there were also some restrictions on the researchers to inquire about the residential situation of vendors from both India and Bangladesh and little chance to meet anyone again on the next market day other than the same vendors. At times, it created an embarrassing situation to ask questions without properly knowing the informants. There was also a limitation of time to ask questions.

The area and setting

Tripura is one of the seven sister states of north-east India, surrounded on its north, west, south and even in the east by different districts of Bangladesh. The state is

crisscrossed and skirted by many hill ranges and streams with innumerable *charras* (small falls) and rivulets. The length of the international border between Tripura and Bangladesh is 856 km.

Tripura is the third smallest state of India. The district studied here South Tripura. It has three sub-divisions, namely Belonia, Santirbazar and Sabroom, divided into 6 blocks, 90 panchayats, 138 revenue villages and 70 TAADC villages. The district is located in the extreme south of Tripura and its area is 1534.2 sq. km. On its west and south, the district is bounded by the Noakhali district of Bangladesh and on its north and east, it is bounded by the Gomati district of Tripura. The population of South Tripura district is 4,33,737 and population density is 283 persons per square kilometre. There are many castes and tribal communities who inhabit the district. The villages along the border, namely Sarasima, Amzadnagar, Baspodua, Krishnapur, Dakshin Matai, Matai, Debipur, Dharmannagar, Hrishawmukh, Kalikapur, Haripur, Sibpur, Krishnanagar, Nalua, Abhoynagar, Srinagar, Amlighat, Madhabnagar, Natunbazar, Radhanagar, Siddhinagar, Ekinpur, Barapathari, Rajnagar, Nihannagar, Amarapur, Bankul, etc. are mostly Hindu-dominated, with some Muslim hamlets.

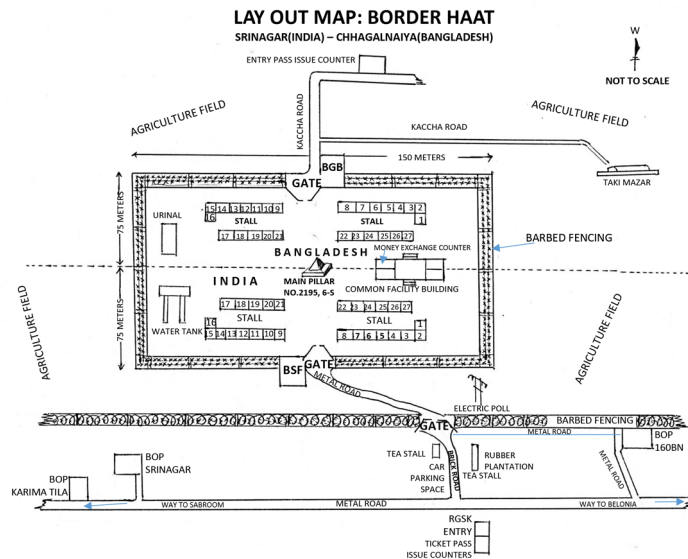


Figure-1: Layout map of the border haat.

Belonia, the HQ of the South Tripura district, lies along the Muhuri river. There are some Indian government offices for controlling the Indo-Bangladesh border activities, like Muhurighat Land Customs Station (estd. 1965) under the Ministry of Finance, Revenue Department and Immigration Check Post. This station is situated near the zero point of the Indo-Bangladesh border (main pillar no. 2160). The main

function of these offices is to collect import and export duties on Bangladeshi and Indian goods. However, another section of the Land Custom Station is called Custom Preventive Force, which prevents illegal transportation of goods. A metalled road connects both countries at Land Custom Station, Belonia. People from both the countries enter through this checkpost with their visas. There are some BSF camps along the border on the Indian side and the Office of the Bangladesh Border Guard (BGB) on the Bangladesh side. Interestingly, the Customs office of Bangladesh is also called Belonia Land Custom Station. There is also a rail station named Belonia since the pre-Independence period.

Location of Srinagar–Chhagalnaiya Border *Haat*

Srinagar–Chhagalnaiya is the third *border haat*. It is located in Srinagar under the jurisdiction Poangbari Rural Development Block in Sabroom sub-division of the South Tripura district of Tripura, India and Mokamiya village in the Chhagalnaiya Division in Feni district of Bangladesh. Local people of both countries called it *Border Haat/Simanta Haat/Srinagar Border Haat* or *Srinagar Haat* (Indian side) and *Chhagalnaiya Border Haat* (Bangladesh side). This place was selected as a *border haat* for its level open land away from locality, a connecting metalled road, the absence of any natural barriers like river, stream or *tilla*, and the existence of a BOP of BSF close by.

This area is in the extreme south of the district, inhabited by many Hindu castes (Brahmin, Kayastha, Mahishya, Kshatriya, Bania, Kamar, Kumar, Swarnakar, Malakar, Chhutor, Dhopa, Napit, Jugi, Jale), religious-minority Muslims, and two tribal communities like Tripura and Mugh (own tribal religion, Buddhist and Christian). Most of the Hindus migrated from bordering districts like Noakhali and Feni of Bangladesh, though some still live in Feni and Noakhali.

This *haat*, situated at Border Pillar No. 2195, 6-S, is 150 meters × 75 meters across the two countries. Its total area is 45,000 square meters. This *haat* is surrounded by agricultural land and rubber fields on the Indian side. A famous Takia Mazar is just outside the *haat* in the north-west within Bangladesh. Hindus and Muslims of both the countries used to visit the Takia Mazar and offer *chadar*, *attar*, *agarbati*, flowers, etc. before the barbwire fencing was constructed. Now it is only accessible to the Bangladeshis.

A historical note on *Border Haat*

Two *Borders haats* started functioning in Meghalaya after a long discussion between the Governments of India and Bangladesh Government during 2010. *Border haats* aim to promote the well-being of the people dwelling in remote areas on both sides of the border by re-establishing the traditional marketplace for local produce. It also makes a cultural/social bridge through regular interactions and checks illegal

infiltration of goods and commodities.

During her visit to India from 10 to 13 January 2010, Sheikh Hasina Wazed, the Prime Minister of Bangladesh, signed a MoU that *border haats* will be established on a pilot basis in selected areas to allow for trade in specific items. Both the Governments agreed that:

1. *Border haats* will be established across the border.
2. Initially, *border haats* would be established at two locations as pilot projects at the following locations:
 - a. Kalaichar, West Garo Hills District, Meghalaya, India – Balamari, Kurigram District, Bangladesh (Pillar No. 1072)
 - b. Balat, East Khasi Hills District, Meghalaya, India – Lauwaghar, Dalara, Sunamgang District, Bangladesh (Pillar No. 1213)
3. Other locations for establishing *border haats* may jointly be identified by India and Bangladesh based on, inter alia, historical location, ease of access, and interdependence of the population on both sides of the border and availability of suitable location.

The MoU signed at New Delhi on 23rd October, 2010, mentions the following 14 Articles:

Article-1: *Haat* Management Committee

Article-2: Area, Fencing and Construction

Article-3: Commodities

Article-4: Joint Meetings of the *Haat* Management Committees

Article-5: Vendors

Article-6: Vendees

Article-7: Timing and Frequency

Article-8: Photo Identity Card

Article-9: Record of Entry/Exit

Article-10: Law Enforcement and Jurisdiction in the *Border Haat*

Article-11: Suspension of Customs Duties and Non-*Tari* Barriers

Article-12: Entry of Security Forces

Article-13: Oversight by Customs Officials and Health Officials, and

Article-14: Medium of Exchange

A memorandum issued by the Ministry of Finance, Government of India (No. F. No. 550/03/2010 LC, dated 14th February 2011) regarding MoU and modalities for '*Border Haat*' on India- Bangladesh border and the Department of Commerce is requested to convey the operational guidelines to other agencies involved in establishing the *border haats*. Issues include the currency to be used, quarantine

and other trade restrictions.

The Indian government proposed 22 *border haats* as a joint venture between the Governments of the two countries for mutual economic development. The Bangladesh Government agreed to open 8 *border haats* primarily, of which 2 in Tripura in India. The Tripura *border haats* are:

1. Srinagar *border haat*: Sabroom division in Poangbari Block of South Tripura district, India – Chhagalnaiya of Feni district, Bangladesh
2. Kamalagar *border haat*: Sipajala district of Tripura-Tarapur in Brahmanbaria district, Bangladesh

These *haats* have been implemented by the Tripura Industrial Development Corporation (TIDC). The Government of Tripura published a Gazette Notification No. F.111(44)-TAX/VAT/2012 dated: 10 January 2013 as an Extraordinary Issue on different matters of the *border haat*, like sale of the following goods by vendors who are local residents (staying within five kilometers from the location of the *haat*) are exempted from payment of VAT on following items:

1. Vegetables, food items, fruits, spices.
2. Minor forest produce e.g. bamboo, grass and broom stick but excluding timber.
3. Products of cottage industries like *gamcha*, *lungi*, etc.
4. Small agricultural household implements e.g. *dao*, plough, axe, spade, chisel, etc.
5. Garments, products, processed food items, fruit juice, toiletries, cosmetics, plastic products, aluminium products, crockery.

The above items may be expanded/ modified by mutual consent. The vendees may offer items of immediate consumption like snacks/juices as may be allowed by the Haat Management Committee.

The exemption is subject to the following conditions:

1. The exemption is allowed only on sale to other vendees for their bona fide personal/ family consumption as long as the vendees are local residents (within 5 km from the location of the *haat*).
2. The exemption is allowed only to the vendors and vendees registered with the Haat Management Committee and are local (within 5 km from the location of the *haat*).
3. For any violation of these conditions, the vendor shall be liable to be proceeded against in accordance with the provisions of the TVAT Act, 2004.

The *border haat* is an interesting field in Social Sciences in general and Anthropology in particular. This *haat* is not like an average weekly market. There are restrictions on all activities of both sellers and buyers, from entering the *haat* to leaving it, and from buying to selling. The *haats* offer a great scope to study the cross-

border communities, human relations, interactions, economy and belongingness. For this study conducted field work in Srinagar *Border Haat* and its neighbouring areas during 2014-2015 in three phases in Indian side.

Inauguration of Border Haat

After the completion of construction work of the *border haat*, the inauguration programme was initiated by the Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Department of Commerce, Government of India (Vide No.12/36/2014 FT (SA), dated 10th October 2014. It was inaugurated on 13th January 2015, Tuesday, at 12.40 pm by Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman, Minister, Commerce & Industry, Government of India and JanabTofail Ahmed, Minister, Commerce & Industry, Bangladesh. Sri Manik Sarkar (Chief Minister, Tripura), Sri Jitendra Singh (Member of the Parliament in Tripura), Sri Pankaj Saran (High Commissioner of India at Dhaka), Sri Himangshu Roy (Zilla Sabhapati of South Tripura), Secretary of Tripura State Industry, Smt. Rita Kar Majumder and Sri Prabhat Choudhury (both local MLAs), along with high-ranking officers from BSF and BGB of India and Bangladesh, respectively, were present on stage. Further dignitaries from Bangladesh included three MPs-Sirin Akhtar, Nizamuddin Hazari and Jahanara Begum – as well as other officers. They expressed their views about the commercial importance and social impact of the *haat* on the people of both the countries. The H'ble Chief Minister of Tripura, Sri Manik Sarkar, was hopeful that the *haat* would reduce instances of smuggling, which should improve the law and order in both the countries and cut down on sales tax losses for both the governments. He was also optimistic about the improvement of relationship between the two countries. The turnout of attendees and media coverage of the event from the Bangladeshi side was higher than the Indian side. Even then, over 3000 participants attended the inauguration, while thousands of onlookers gathered outside the border from both the countries. It was announced that the *border haat* will be open every Tuesday from 20th January 2015 onwards. Dignitaries from Bangladesh offered special kinds of *pithas* or rice cakes (in separate containers) to Indian dignitaries attending the event. In exchange, India offered mementos and *uttariya* (i.e. *resha*- one kind of cloth for tribal women in South Tripura) to all the dignitaries from Bangladesh. After a vote of thanks from the Indian side, national songs of India and Bangladesh were sung to mark the end of this occasion.

Infrastructural development

After selection of this place for the establishment of the Srinagar *Border Haat*, the private agricultural land had to be acquired. Firstly, the proposed *haat* area was measured and demarcated. Construction followed government rule i.e. entry and exit points, construction of barbwire fencing, providing the layout to security agencies, etc. The Department of Industries and Commerce, Government of Tripura set up the *haat* (vide Notification No. F. DI/FT/i(2)/2010/part-ii/15417, dated 5th September 2012). The foundation stone of the *haat* was laid on 3rd November 2013. It was

initiated by the Director, I&C, (vide No. F. DI/FT/1(23)/2012/14683-86, dated 30th October 2013) and the BSF, 101 BN, Salbagan; DIG, 110 BN; and the ADM, South Tripura District. The Commanding Officer, BOP, Srinagar proposed the acquisition of land, which was initiated by the Revenue Department, Government of Tripura, dated 2nd July 2014. Srinagar *Border Haat* is under the Revenue Circle of Sabroom and name of the revenue *mouza* is Krishnanagar. The Sub-Divisional Magistrate was the Chairman of Sub-Division Level Purchase Committee.

Table 1: Particulars of land acquired for Srinagar Border Haat

Khatian No.	Plot No.	Class of land	Area in acres	Name of the landholder	Valuation per <i>kani</i> *	Valuation of proposed land
768	2282 (part) 283 (full) & 2284 (full)	Bhiti (tilla) Chara (tilla), Nal	0.17,0.04, 0.02 & 0.41	Mantu Mia, S/O. Rahim Ullah, Srinagar	Rs. 1,80,000.00	Rs. 1,84,500.00
570	2288 (part)	Tilla	0.45	Sri Anil Ch. Malla, S/O. DhirendraMalla, Srinagar	Rs. 1,80,000.00	Rs.2,02,500.00
302	2306 (part)	Nal	0.01	Sri SankarShil, GoutamShil and Sri UrtamShil, S/O. Manindra Kr. Shil, Srinagar	Rs. 1,80,000.00	Rs.4,500.00
189	2307 (part)	Nal	0.01	Smt. NituBalaShil, W/O. Manindra Kr. Shil, Srinagar	Rs. 1,80,000.00	Rs.4,500.00
23	2277(part)	Chara (Nal)	0.03	Sri Anil Ch. Shil, S/O. BipinShil, Srinagar	Rs. 1,80,000.00	Rs.13,500.00
239/1 239/2	2275(part) 276(part)	Nal Bastu (Nal)	0.08, 0.16, 0.24	Sri BagalaCharanMajumder, S/O. JagannathMajumder, Srinagar	Rs. 1,80,000.00	R. 1,08,000.00
Total jote land: 1.15 acres					Total valuation of land: Rs.5,17,500.00	

* In Tripura, the measuring unit of land is *kani* (1*kani* = 40 *satak*, its equivalent metric measurement is 1600 m²).

After acquisition of land by the Revenue Department, Government of Tripura, the infrastructure of the *haat* was developed by the Indian government for an estimated Rs. 2 crore and 39 lakh, which was undertaken by the TIDC, Government of Tripura, with funding from the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, Government of India. There are four sheds with multiple stalls in each shed. The sheds are constructed of steel with corrugated double-sloped roof and concrete floor. Each country has 27 stalls, with each stall having an area of 27 m².

A single-story common facility building is centrally located from the sheds and the gates are at equal distances from the *haat*. This building has four rooms, two for each country, for money exchange and official purposes. A letter issued to the Regional Manager, Reserve Bank of India (RBI), Agartala, Tripura requesting to arrange opening a currency exchange counter Vide No. F. 4 (62)-DM/S/GL/BLN/2014/948, dated 13th November 2014 and another letter issued to Foreign Currency Exchanger SBI, RBI authorized, Vide No. FED, GUWA/01-06011/2014-15, dated 22nd December, 2014. State Bank of India has been authorized to exchange foreign currency from the Indian side, Vide No. F (64)-DM/S/GL/2013/93, dated 30th January, 2015.

A water tank and two toilets face each other under one roof by the western boundary. All four sides of the *haat* are fenced by 10 feet high barbed wire. There are two entry points, one within the Indian territory for Indian citizens and the other within Bangladesh, for Bangladeshi citizens. Electric lamp posts are located on the border, the electricity is supplied by India. However, the sheds have no power supply. The floor of the entire *haat* is tiled. Two sheds for security guards are located just outside the gates of the *haat* on both sides.

The TIDC acted as a facilitator of the Director of Industries & Commerce, when the Government of Tripura handed over the border *haat* to Management Committee & District Administration on 16th February, 2015.

Approach road

A brick-built approach road (800 meters) on the Indian side is connected to the Bilonia- Sabroom bus route at the first gate; from there, one metalled road connects the *haat* on the southern side. On the other hand, the approach road towards Bangladesh i.e., the northern entry point of the *haat*, is a narrow dirt road.

Entry pass counters

Two entry pass issue counters are located in the Rajiv Gandhi Seva Kendra of Srinagar Gram Panchayat, around 800 metres from the first gate of the market, and connected by a brick road with the *border haat*.

Management of Trade and Business

Border Haat Management Committee (BHMC)

According to the mode of operation, of BHMC is constituted by five members headed by the Additional District Magistrate/Sub Divisional Magistrate of the district having jurisdiction over the respective *Border Haat* of each country and one representative of each the police, customs, border security agency and village/ union level local government.

From India:

Additional District Magistrate, South Tripura (Chairman)

Sub Divisional Police Officer, Sabroom, South Tripura (Member)

Superintendent of Customs, Belonia, South Tripura (Member)

Commanding Officer, Srinagar Border Out Post, BSF, Sabroom (Member)

Chairperson, Poangbari Panchayat Samiti (Member)

From Bangladesh:

Upazilla Chairman, Chhagalnaiya, Feni

Upazilla Nirbahi Officer, Chhagalnaiya, Feni

Officer in- Charge, Chhagalnaiya Police Station, Feni

Company Commander, E-Company (Modugram), 4 Border Gurdb of Bangladesh (BGB)

Feni Revenue Officer (Superintendent), Customs, Excise and VAT, Chhagalnaiya Range

Union Parishad Chairman, Radhanagar Union Parishad, Chhagalnaiya, Feni

The list of members of the Committee may change and any amendment in the list of members will be notified within two working days to the counterpart committee, through the respective border security/customs member. Additional District Magistrate/ SDM may authorize an officer from local administration for day-to-day monitoring of the border *haat* and addressing the emergencies.

Meetings held between BHMC in India and Bangladesh from time to time discussed many items on the MoU and took decisions with mutual understanding. The preparatory meeting of BHMC was held on 20th May 2013 at the Tehsil Office, Srinagar, Sabroom (Vide letter no. F. DI/FT/1(23)/2012/6218-28, dated 15th May 2013) and the BHMC meeting was held on 12th June 2013 at Takia Mazar (near pillar no. 2195) at 10.30 am (Vide letter no. 2012/7581-93, dated 6th June 2013). Another meeting held on 15th June 2013 at 10.30 am at Srinagar Panchayat Office discussed vendors from each side. In the meeting held at the Office of the Upazilla Nirbahi Officer, Chhagalnaiya, Feni on 4th September 2014, at 11.00 am BST. The discussion was on vendors and vendees, printing of identity card for vendors

and vendees including special passes for guests from both the countries, the list of items that can be traded through selected vendors, procedure of entry and exit, maintaining proper records, security measures to be taken during *haat* operations, date of the actual start of the *haat*, the Chief Guest to be invited, the maintenance of the *haat* and other issues. Additional joint meetings of the Committees continued to discuss operational issues after two working days' notice in writing.

Photo identity cards for vendors and vendees

The BHMC performs *inter alia* and maintains a list of authorized vendors/vendees. People within five kilometers of the *border haat* applied for a photo identity card as a vendor or vendee. After screening the applications, two lists of 27 vendors each from Bangladesh and India were approved. The respective District Magistrates and Collectors issued identity cards in the name of the head of the family. The final list of vendors was submitted by the respective BHMC as mandatory. Listed members must carry photo identity cards to enter the *haat*.

Sl. No.	Name of the Gram Panchayat	Number of Households
1.	Madhabnagar	702
2.	Srinagar	579
3.	Rajnagar	556
4.	Krishnagar	474
5.	PashmiTakkaTulsi	399
6.	Dasarathnagar	280
7.	Dakshin Srinagar	279
8.	PurbaTakkatulsi	279
9.	Amlighat	262
10.	Subhasnagar	232
	Total	4042

Table 2: Gram Panchayats under Poangbari Block

A total of 3971 identity cards were issued by the District Magistrate and Collectors, South Tripura, Belonia. In addition, the District Administration issues temporary passes with a day's validity for guests/visitors on market days. A sample copy of the pass had already been handed over to the local BSF authority. Border Haat Management Committee of both the countries regularly consults so that the *haat* may not be over crowded.

The holders of photo identity cards of one country may enter the *haat* and visit all stalls but cannot enter the territory of the other country beyond the *haat*.

The designated *border haat* areas will be exempted from regulations regarding passports and visa. The District Magistrate/Deputy Commissioner of the district with jurisdiction over the designated *border haats* of each country in constitution with the Haat Management Committee will issue necessary identity cards as per format and will notify each other.

For example, Anamul Haque Mojumdar of Banspara, Chhagalnaiya, in Feni district, Bangladesh, holding vendor card no. 8 explained the procedures of getting the seller card which is called *vendor card* in Bangladesh. Anamul submitted the duly filled-in form along with two copies of passport-sized photos to the Home Ministry, Republic of Bangladesh. The respective authorities, forwarded by the local Councilor of his area, verified it and Anamul deposited 100 TK to the respective office. After 30-45 days, the Deputy Commissioner of Feni issues the vendor card. Anamul also mentioned that the issuance of these cards is embroiled in nepotism.

Detailing of information in vendee cards

The Indian vendee photo ID card is known as *Srinagar Border Hat Identity Card*. It displays the name of the vendee, the vendee's father's name, date of birth and the issuing authority (District Magistrate and Collector of South Tripura district). The card also bears the image of national flag of India and *Ashokastambha* i.e., the logo of the Indian government, on top. The reverse side shows the card holder's address, EPIC no., signature of the card holder, date of issue, validity, and serial number of ID card.

On the other hand, the photo identity card issued by Bangladesh has some different items. It has the symbol of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, card no., name, father's/husband's name, mother's name, date of birth, address, national ID card/birth registration number of card holder, validity, date of issue, and seal and signature of the Deputy Commissioner, Feni. The other side of the card shows some instructions like non-transferability of card, lost case information, and expiry and renewal information.

Market day, timing, commodities and goods

The weekly *haat* opens on Tuesday from 11 am to 4.30 pm from March to October and 10 am to 3:30 pm from November to February according to Indian Standard Time. There are two display boards with Article 3, which mentions in both Bengali and English that the following commodities are allowed for trading:

- (a) Locally produced vegetables, food items, fruits and spices
- (b) Minor forest products like bamboo, bamboo grass and brooms, excluding timber
- (c) Products of local cottage industries like *gamchha*, *lungi*, etc.
- (d) Small locally produced household and agricultural implements etc. like

dao, spade, plough, chisel, etc.

- (e) Locally produced garments, melamine products, processed food items, fruit juice, etc.

The list of items allowed for trade may be expanded/modified by mutual consent of the two countries. The vendees may offer items for immediate consumption such as snacks and juices as may be allowed by the BHMC. The timing and frequency may be further set/modified by the mutual consent of both Joint BHMC as mentioned in Article-7.

Commodities on a market day

There are some restrictions to the sale of commodities in a *Border Haat* as per Article 3. Table 3 below mentions the commodities sold by vendors of both the countries on 21st July 2015. Article 11 also reports that the commodities sold in the *Border Haat* are exempted from the payment of customs duties.

Types of items and shops	India	Bangladesh	Remarks
Cloth	Saree, <i>gamcha</i> , <i>lungi</i> , towel, handkerchief	-	-
Readymade Garments	T-shirt, shirt, inner wear, Muslim <i>topi</i> , socks, <i>sabwar-kameez</i> suits, frocks, blouse	-	-
Readymade Garments	T-shirt, shirt, inner wear, Muslim <i>topi</i> , socks, <i>sabwar-kameez</i> suits, frocks, blouse	-	-
Nil	All types for both male and females	Low cost items for low income group	-
Bedding materials	Bed sheet, pillow cover	-	-
Cosmetics	Nil	-	-
Tea & snacks	Tea and snacks	-	One stall only - no.14; part of grocery and cosmetics business of stall no. 12., used LPG
Grocery	Except rice	Tobacco products (chewing and smoking)	Demand of Horlicks, tea leaf, coffee, shaving blades, Indian chocolates
Vegetables	Plantain	-	-
Fruits	Banana	Mango, apple, apricot, cashew nut, banana	-
Bakery products-	Branded bakery products	-	-

Household utensils	Utensils made of steel, aluminium, iron, brass, wood, plastic, tin and glass	Utensils made of aluminium, iron, brass, wood, plastic, tin and glass	-
Plastic goods	-	Chairs, buckets, tubs, mats, plates, cups, tumblers	-
Stationery	Exercise books, pens, pencils, etc.	-	-
Baby care products	Diapers, powder, body oil and creams	-	All most all customers are Bangladeshi
Fish, dry fishes and crabs	-	Five types of sweet water fishes and two types of sea and four types of dried fishes	All most all customers are Indians
Electrical items	-	Light, fan,	-
Electronics	-	Solar items, clock	-
Toys	-	-	-
Ice cream, snacks items, milk products, green coconut& fruit juice	Snacks, branded fruit juice, milk products	Ice cream	Green coconut in open place by Bangladeshi vendor
Fishing nets	-	Fishing nets	-
Fishing traps	-	Different types of bamboo fishing traps	-
Agricultural tool parts	Agricultural tools	-	-
Talisman	-	<i>Tabij</i> and talisman	Two stalls on open space
Herbal items	-	Herbal items	In open place
Shoes	-	Plastic and leather	-
Handicraft products	-	Mat (<i>khes</i>), <i>sheetalpaati</i>	-
Others	-	Umbrella, cricket bat	-

Table 3: Trading Items in *Border Haat*

Though there are 27 stalls on each side, Indian vendees are more in number since many licensed vendees share their stalls with kin or family members or given to other known persons based on mutual understanding. On the Bangladesh side, few stalls were vacant every day and rarely seen that more than one vendees occupied a single vender's space. The vendees wear their ID card around their necks. Customers collect receipts/bills from the vendees after payment. A few licensed vendees of Bangladesh were selling their products/goods sitting on the ground in the middle of the market. The Indians are fond of purchasing fresh and dry fishes including

traditional and hybrid varieties of freshwater as well as sea fishes, particularly hilsa and *nona-ilish* or hilsa preserved in salt.

Entry and exit

The BHMC looks after the entry/exit of authorized vendors/vendees. Local B.S.F. authority from Srinagar B.O.P. is regulating the entry and exit of vendors, vendees, visitors and guests to the Srinagar- Chhagalnaiya Border Haat on each market day by maintaining three separate registers. On the Bangladesh side, the BGB personnel maintain similar entry/exit records. Before entry and exit, the security personnel verify the documents and check the body, bags and belongings very rigidly and attentively at two entry points on the Indian side.

As per Article 9, the respective Haat Management Committee it should always ensure the maintenance of entry/exit records of both vendors and vendees in both countries. At the time of closing of the *Border Haat*, this record is crosschecked by the guards of both countries to ensure that all vendors and vendees who entered the *Border Haat* have returned to their respective countries. In the event of any doubt, designated representatives of the BHMC contact their counterparts/relevant security personnel in the other country.

Cleaning of haat

The cleaning of *Border haat* is done every quarter of the year, with both the countries alternating the duties. Accordingly, cleaning for the first quarter i.e., for the month of January to March 2015 was done by Bangladesh. The cleaning up is done by daily wage labourers. Once the *haat* ends, local Bangladeshi rag pickers from outside the boundary of the haat pick up all polythene packets, paper cartons and plastic bottles. They also pick up paper packets, paper items and plastic bottles.

Vehicle parking

Hundreds of vehicles are parked on muddy ground on both sides of the brick road near the main gate. Both owners and drivers face parking problems due to the lack of sufficient parking space, shade and lavatory. In case of Bangladeshi side, the parking space is not sufficient and layer is made of brick, which is far away from the gate. Therefore, vendors have to transport the goods manually after unloading or before loading.

Stalls outside the main gate

There are open 8 temporary stalls (in Indian Side) near the first gate on both sides of the approach road under the shadow of rubber trees. These stalls are set up on the ground and sell tea, biscuits, snacks and fast food items. The number of stalls and customers increase during main festivals of both the Muslims and the Hindus.

Monitoring by local administration, BSF and BGB

Concerned BGB and BSF member will ensure security measures as per mode of operation of *Border Haat*. Besides, police personnel are also engaged on market days outside the *haat* to maintain law and order. On market days, all documentation is checked at the entry point of the *haat* by the BSF and BGB. They also check the cartons, bags, baskets and other containers to stop prohibited items from being traded. Security personnel are not allowed to enter the *haat* premises except in emergencies, to be determined by the District Magistrate/Deputy Commissioner of the District as stated in Article 12. However, some BSF personnel (in uniform or in civil dress) were seen patrolling the *haat*. They also blow whistles in front of the stalls just before the closing hours of the *haat*. After everybody has left, they close the two collapsible doors of the Common Facility Hall, switch off all electrical appliances and lock the main entry gate. They watch the fence like any other bordering area.

The Superintendent of Customs, Belonia, inspects the *Border Haat* along with other officials on market days because there is no separate Custom Preventive Force station in Sabroom. They watch out for commodities that are strictly prohibited or any other kind of illegal trading.

PRI bodies i.e. Srinagar Panchayat Samiti, Krishnanagar Gram Panchayat and local people have extended their wholehearted cooperation and are also playing a pivotal role for the smooth functioning of the *Border Haat*.

The BDO, Poangbari, regularly visits the market as a representative of district administration. The BDO is involved in the *haat* since its inception and also renders his services during the visit of VIPs, meetings, and management activities such as cleaning, providing required facilities to the vendors and vendees, etc.

Government officials like BDO, ADM, or any members of the *Border Haat* Management Committee of both the countries visit the market off and on and discuss with security personnel. The law and order situation is maintained jointly by the police and the BSF. This *haat* had been visited by Sri R.P. Singh, IPS, Addl. D.G., BSF, Eastern Command on 14th July 2015.

Management of Passage

Entry pass issue counters open on market day in Rajiv Gandhi Seva Kendra of Srinagar Gram Panchayat. Staff of the Block Development Office, Poangbari, Sabroom, and South Tripura issue the pass for INR 10.00 each to guests and buyers after verification of photo identity cards like EPIC and Aadhar from 8:30 am to 3:00 pm. They stay on the job till 5 pm. It is reported that on average 1200-1350 entry passes are issued a day on the Indian side. The visitors/buyers are mostly male; entry passes are not issued to schoolchildren but exceptions may be made on requests by parents or members of the child's family.

Vendors from both India and Bangladesh transact their business in the border haat. The following tables provide detailed information in this regard.

The average money exchanged on a market day is around INR 3-4 lakhs and TR 2-3 lakhs according to Md. Illius, who is in charge of the Bangladesh Money Exchange office. People exchange both currencies at this single-window counter. The exchange value for Indian and Bangladeshi currency is INR 100.00 equals 120.00 Taka. But any other foreign currency exchange has not yet been started.

The Indian stalls cater to a large number of Bangladeshi buyers, who purchase goods in huge quantities with Bangladeshi Taka which in most cases overlooked by BGB personnel. Indian sellers accept the currency according to the rate of conversion from the buyers. Then they exchange with their Bangladeshi co-traders or from the money exchange counter located in common facility hall. The Bangladeshi traders follow the same process. Indian shop-owners tell the price after converting it to Taka. Though they are open to both the currencies, the Bangladeshi shopkeepers demand INR since its value is higher than Taka.

Article 14 describes the medium of exchange allowed in the *haat*. Both currencies are accepted and barter system is also recognized. Each individual is allowed to purchase only as much as is reasonable for bona fide personal/family consumption. The notifications issued to this effect will be exchanged through diplomatic channels.

Currency management and exchange

The pass counters are located about 800 metres away from the gate. On the Bangladesh side, the entry pass costs 20 TK. The Border Guard Bangladesh officers report that more than 1700 passes are issued on a market day, increasing during festivals such as Eid, when people come from distant places like Dhaka, Chittagao, Sylhet, etc. Nobody is allowed to re-enter once they exit the *haat*.

The Block Development Officer, Poangbari, reports that the income from sale of entry passes has been deposited in a separate bank account and this money is utilized for cleaning of *haat* and petty expenditures.

Stall No.	Name of vendee	Age (yrs.)	Education	Community	Religion	Resides at (village)	Distance (KM)	Commodities	Sale (Rs in thousand approx.)	Other economic activities in other days	Remarks
1	Mohan Tripura	35	VIII	Tripura	Tribal	Meru	5	Grossary, soft drinks, plastic bottles, etc	20-22	Paddy cultivation	Economic benefit & exchange of culture
2	Sukanta Das	31	X	Kayastha	Hindu	Srinagar	5	Cloth & readymade garments	48-50	Paddy cultivation	Suggested for bi weekly market
3	JhantuBhowmick	48	M.A	Kayastha	Hindu	Krisnagar	.5	Grossary & cosmetics	20-25	Same business in locality & rubber cultivation	Suggested for bi weekly market & extension of shade & more toilets
4	Prakash Nath	55	III	Jugi	Hindu	Krisnagar	2	Grossary	15-16	Same business in locality	4 helpers, water & more clean toilets, more license should be issued for another day
5	Suresh Pal	60	V	-	Hindu	Srinagar	2	Grossary & cosmetics	18-20	Same business in locality	Increase the sale, suggested to extend the shade, time and market days.
6	Alo Kumar Tripura	48	IX	Tripura	Tribal	West Tuka colony	10	Grossary & cosmetics	19-20	Same business in locality	Suggested to extend the shade and market days.
7	Sajai Choudhary	34	X	Brahmin	Hindu	Krisnagar	2	Grossary & cosmetics	15-17	Same business in locality, paddy cultivation	Suggested to extend the shade, market days and issue more 27 vendee cards.
8	Chandan Tripura	32	VIII	Tripura	Tribal	Kaptoli, Dashrathnagar	5	Grossary & readymade garments	75-80	Same business in locality.	Scope for cultural exchange & interaction of people of both the countries
9	Swapan Choudhary	58	VIII	Brahmin	Hindu	Srinagar	3	Grossary	30-40		

10	Apu Kumar Tripura	32	VIII	Tripura	Tribal	Krishnagar	3	Grossary	8-10	Same business in locality.	Satisfied in every respects
11	Nikhil Sarkar	45	BA	Kayastha	Hindu	Krishnagar	3	Grossary	30-35	Same business in locality & paddy cultivation	
12	Krishna Mandal	50	VIII	-	Hindu	Madhabnagar	5	Grossary & readymade garments	20-25	Same business in locality	Complain against BCB
13	Subhasish Mazumder	30	VIII	Kayastha	Hindu	Krishnagar	2	Grossary & cosmetics	35-40	Same business & cultivation, produce vegetables	No comments, satisfied
14	DipakDey	30	VIII	Kayastha	Hindu	Shrinagar	2	First food & grossary	25-30	Same business in locality	Use gas cylinder, electricity necessary for using refrizator
15	Krishna Pal	50	X	-	Hindu	Smarendranagar	5	Grossary, cosmetics & steel utensils	19-20	Same business in locality & paddy cultivation	Suggested to extend the shade, market days and complain against BCB
16	Tukh Ahmed	28	VII	Muslim	Islum	Krishnagar	3	Grossary, plastic & readymade garments	55-60	Same business in locality & paddy cultivation	Suggested to extend the shade, arrange of parking place & cleanliness toilets.
17	Sandeep Das	43	VII	Sutradhar	Hindu	Subhasnagar	2	Grossary, cosmetics & steel utensils	24-25	Same business in locality & paddy cultivation	Suggested to extend the shade for protecting from sun and rain.
18	ChandanPatari	40	Ix	Kayastha	Hindu	Smarendranagar	5	Grossary, cosmetics & readymade garments	35-40	Grossary & cut piece cloth in locality	Suggested to extend the shade, open bank for exchange of currency to prevent loss & for safety point of view.
19	SajalRaha	35	X	Kayastha	Hindu	Amlghat	5	Grossary, plastic & steel utensils	12-15	Same business in locality	Suggested to extend the shade for protecting from sun and rain.
20	NiranjanDebnath	56	X	Kayastha	Hindu	Shrinagar	2	Handloom, mill saree, dhuti & readymade garments	15-20	Same business in locality & paddy cultivation	Extend the shade, clean toilets & one more market day

21	HemantDebnath	78	III	Kayastha	Hindu	Srinagar	3	Sarce, & grossary,	25-30	Same business in locality	Harassment of Bangladeshi customers by BGB & more one day haat open.
22	RakhaIDey	49	V	Kayastha	Hindu	Chitlabari, Srinagar	4	Grossary, house hold articles & betel leaf	35-40	Grossary & vegetable Business in locality	Harassment of Bangladeshi customers by BGB
23	TarunMajumder	54	B.A.	Kayastha	Hindu	Amlighat	7	Steel utensils, household items (plastic&iron) & cloth	20-25	Same business in locality & paddy cultivation	Extend the shade, clean & extension of toilets.
24	Samar Mitra	35	X	Kayastha	Hindu	Madhabnagar	8	Grossary, cosmetics, garments, bed sheet, etc	45-50	Same business in locality & paddy cultivation	Suggested to extend the shade for protecting from sun and rain.
25	Subrata Dutta	35	BA	Kayastha	Hindu	Srinagar	2	Grossary & cosmetics	50-60	Same business in locality & paddy cultivation	Suggested to extend the shade, electricity connection in stall, cleanliness toilets & arrange of parking place
26	Sahadev Das	40	XII	Kayastha	Hindu	Srinagar	3	Grossary & cosmetics	45-50	Same business & paddy cultivation	Extend the shade, cleanliness of toilets & electricity
27	Santosh Majumder	60	XI	Kayastha	Hindu	Srinagar	1.5	Steel utensils, stationary, cosmetics	30-35	Same business in locality & paddy cultivation	Satisfied in all respects

Table 4: Stalls at a glance, Indian side

Table 4 shows a snapshot of Indian vendees with their allotted stall numbers, name, age, educational qualification, village name, distance, religion, name of the community, goods and commodities sold, average sale on market days, economic activities on other days and some remarks by them. A total of 27 vendees are male, of whom 4 are tribal, 22 Hindu and 1 Muslim. The vendees from Tripura are engaged in different kinds of business. Most of the vendees sell grocery items along with other commodities and goods to cater to more demand by the Bangladeshis and for more income. Most of the business person spractice the same kind of business on the other six days in their village and a few of them practice cultivation.

There were no licensed female vendees on the Indian side, but every vendee on the list had 2-3 helpers or sales assistants. The maximum sale is reported by the stalls shared by two or more people and selling different types of items. Indian vendees also reported that BGB did not allow them to carry more than 3-4 pieces of the same item, so the customers had to return some of their purchased goods to the vendees (stall no. 7, 9, 12, 21 as on 27.7.2015). Indian vendees sell to Bangladeshi customers according to printed price (if any) after converting to Bangladeshi Taka. However, in many cases, the Bangladeshi vendors sell their items on printed price (without conversion to Indian currency), which results in monetary loss to the Indian customers, as reported by Debasis Nath, (helper in stall no.10), Krishnagar, age 36 years, married, graduate. The owner of stall no. 5 reported that sometimes fake currency was used by Bangladeshi customers and stall no. 18 suggested opening an Indian national bank for exchange of currency to prevent loss as well as for safety point of view. The Bangladeshi Byabasayee Samiti has objected to a bulk purchase of grocery items, baby care products, cosmetics and health drinks by Bangladeshi customers, as reported by stall no. 22.

All vendees also reported that more than 150 families benefitted directly from this *haat*. On every market day, the average sale in Indian shops is Rs 30,000 – Rs 35,000. Most of the correspondents remarked on an infrastructural development of the *haat* for a smoother functioning.

Stall no	Name of vendee	Age (yrs.)	Education	Community	Religion	Resides at (village)	Distance (KM)	Commodities	Average Sale (Rs in thousand approx.)	Other economic activities other days	Remarks
1	Ataur Rahaman	25	PG	Muslim	Islam	Purba Modugram	1	Grossary, plastic & garlic	25-30	Private job	Increase the market day & duration of time
2	NazulIslam	32	X	Muslim	Islam	Purba Modugram	1	Fruits, bakery, cigarate, grossary& garlic	15-18	Manufacture of <i>Namajitopi</i> & export it & cultivation	Cleanliness of toilets & supply drinking water
3	AbulKasem	25	X	Muslim	Islam	Banspara	5	Fast food, bakery, fruits & cold drinks..	25-30	Fruits business in locality	Cleanliness of toilets & supply drinking water
4	Mukbul Haque	30	X	Muslim	Islam	Dakshin Alamoni	2	Fruits	15-20	Same business in locality	Improve the approach road of haat&tpollet
5	Musaraf	40	VIII	Muslim	Islam	Chhagalhatya	3	Barbed fishes & dry sea fishes	15-20	Same business in locality & tea stall	Satisfied
6	Bidhan Karmakar	23	PG	Blacksmith	Hindu	Paschim Modugram	5	Iron house hold own product items, aluminium, electronic, wooden & lock-keys	15-16	Same business in locality	Development the approach road & cleanliness of toilets
7	Sahidul Haque	34	X	Muslim	Islam	Uttar Satara	7	Bakery products, <i>muri</i> , <i>chanachur</i> & electronic goods	7-8	Cultivation & day labour	Development the approach road & cleanliness of toilets
8	Babul Saha	35	X	Toddy seller	Hindu	Paschim Chhagalhatya	5	Bakery product	8-10	Same business in locality	Satisfied
9	Sahikul Islam	40	X	Muslim	Islam	Dakshin Jashpur	7	Bakery, cosmetics, fishing nets, garlic, toys & electronic goods	18-20	Cultivation	Development the approach road & cleanliness of toilets
10	AbulKalam	60	IV	Muslim	Islam	Mokamia	1	Bakery product, massage oil	7-8	Tea stall	Harassment by BGB
11	Abdallah	28	XII	Muslim	Islam	Purba Modugram	1	Bakery product, Grossary, garlic, pulses, & Milk	9-10	Same business, Cultivation	Road problem
12	Nurul Afsar	32	X	Muslim	Islam	Chhagalhaia	3	Bakery product	7-8	Confectionar's shop & Grosser	No problem
13	Fazlur Rahman	27	Xi	Muslim	Islam	Purba Madugram	1	Bakery product	10-15	Cultivation	No problem

14	Absent										
15	Roni Kamla Shil	32	XII	Barbar	Hindu	Uttar Radhamank	1	Bakery Product, grossery & plastic product	20-21	Private job & distributor of water	No problem
16	Kishore Kumar Pal	25	XII	Kunhar	Hindu	Feni	2.5	Fish & Dry fish, Shaece & gamets	50	Same business	No problem.
17	Md Oberdul Haque	50	XI	Muslim	Islam	Chhagalhaiya	10	Fish & dry fish	15-20,	Same business, Private job & cultivation	Road problem.
18	MdSwapan	27	VI	Muslim	Islam	Nijpania	5	Fish	45-50	Same business in local market	No problem& no suggestions
19	Aham	22	III	Muslim	Islam	Chhagalhaiya	3	Fish & dry fish	15-20	Same business in local market	No problem& no suggestions
20	Hamid	21	X	Muslim	Islam	Purba Modugram	1.5	Grossary items	10-12	Car driving	Development of approach road
21	Md. Ali	35	X	Muslim	Islam	Mokamriya	5	Fish, dry fish & grossary	60-70	Same business in local market	Half of allotted area in rent to a neighbourhood for grossary shop
22	Bellal	50	VI	Muslim	Islam	Chhagalhaiya	5	Fish	40-45	Same business in local market	No problem& no suggestions
23	Shyamal Karnakar	46	IX	Blacksmith	Hindu	Modugram	4	Household articles & agricultural implements, plastic articles and chappals	10-12	Same business in local market	No problem& no suggestions Make iron items by own hand as caste tradition
24	Absent										
25	Tuhin Majumder	24	BA	Kayastha	Hindu	Purba Modupur	1.5	Fruits-rango, apple & pear.	8-10	Rented car business	Cleanliness in toilet and market aread. increased the market day
26	Absent										
27	Mahasin Mazumder	35	XI	Muslim	Islam	Chhagalhaiya	.5	Grossary, plastic, onion, garlic, tea stall, etc.	25-30	Same business in local market	Development of approach road

Table - 5: Stalls at a Glance, Bangladesh Side

Table no. 5 depicts the same subjects as Table no. 4 above. Three stalls (no. 14, 24 and 26) were absent on the Bangladesh site on 27. 7.2015. Of the total of 24 stalls, 6 belong to Hindu castes such as Kayastha, potter, blacksmith (2), toddy sellers and barbers. The rest are Muslims. The average age of vendees is 30-35 years. Most of the vendees have received secondary/higher secondary education and two have even completed their post graduation. There are no illiterates. Hindu castes sold bakery goods, grocery, plastic products and fishes including dried fish. Blacksmiths followed their traditional occupation and sold iron articles like household and agricultural implements. One interesting fact is that the fishing net, fishing traps, old garments and *chappals* were all sold by Muslims.

The average sale in Indian currency on 27.7.2015 was Rs 15,000 to Rs 20,000. A young hawker sold betel leaf and *pan masala* and 4 adult Muslim sold *tabij*, finger rings, different kinds of herbal medicines and animal items for curing diseases. All vendees bought and sold wares over 6 days, especially in the same type of business - private jobs, cultivation work, day labour, petty business, tailoring works, etc. Also, Bangladeshi people still smuggled in restricted items such as poultry birds, chicken, fruits plants and herbal medicines.

Socio-Economic and religious background of the vendees and visitors

Vendees and visitors of *Border Haat* are of different age groups and genders and come from different regional, socio-economic, educational and religious backgrounds. In most of the cases, this is reflected through their belongings, their clothes and accessories, hair style, purchased items, language and exchange of greetings. There are Hindus and tribals from India and Muslims from Bangladesh, and they can not only be sellers but also buyers and visitors. Some Muslim men have beards and wear skull caps, *pajamas*, *lungi* and *kurta*, with *mehendi* on hands and *surma* on eyes. Young Muslim married women also came along with their husbands and kids. Some of them wore *burkha* and *chadar* to cover the upper part of the body. The Indian Hindu men wore pants, shirts; T-shirts, *dhota-kurta* and women wore *saree* and *salwar-kameez*. Tribal women wore their traditional clothes. All people spoke in the local Bengali language. Most of the buyers and visitors belong to lower and middle-class economic groups. They came from nearby villages and a few came from far to see the newly opened Srinagar/ Chhagalnaiya *Border Haat* or *Simanta Haat*. Two Muslim visitors came to the *haat* from Dhaka (New Two Star Garments in Nagar Plaza) along with relatives residing in Chhagalnaiya to explore the scope of readymade garments business in this market. They found that while the Bangladeshi buyers were eager to purchase Indian garments, Indians are not so interested about Bangladeshi clothes. Many youngsters of both countries clicked their photographs along with family members in front of the main pillar as memories. Many visitors also called their family, friends or kin over cell phone from the *haat* to share their experience. Some also sent photographs through Whats App or email

from the *haat*. On some market days, a group of three *hijras* or eunuchs became to the *haat* from the neighbouring areas in Sabroom sub-division begging for money.

Activities of the vendees and buyers and flow of people

On the Indian side, vendees came to the market along with their goods from 9.30 am on the market day. They used trucks, matadors, van rickshaws, bicycles. Some vendees even carried the goods on their shoulders or heads. All transporting vehicles wait in a queue in front of the double barbed first entry gate. No vehicle is allowed beyond the fence. They enter into the gate by producing their vendee cards and sometimes check the bags, containers and commodities. After entering they immediately arrange their goods in respective stalls with the help of 2-3 salesmen. The buyers also move around, comparing the quality, quantity, price, size, design, etc. of the goods. The footfall gradually decreases from 3.30 pm. Many Indian people see the *majar* from the north-eastern corner of the *haat* and recall memories. A few Bengali daily and weekly newspapers like *Dainik Fenir Samoy*, *Naya Paigam*, *Parasuram*, *Dainik Durbar*, and *Saptahik Hawkers* published from Feni, monthly newspapers like *Haider* published from Chhagalnaiya, and *Manav Adhikar Barta* published by the Human Rights Review Society, Dhaka, are distributed by a journalist in the *haat* for free. Selling of newspaper is not permitted in market premises. These papers also publish *Border Haat* news from time to time.

In a sense, a *haat* is a meeting place of people, where they go on market days, buy and sell their goods, meet with known people and relatives, and exchange their views in different spheres of life, especially social, economic, and day to day aspects. Sometimes they sit in a place and gossip about family matters or share their experiences. This scope is less in a *Border Haat* due to administrative issues and time constraint. The BSF personnel keep a watch on the people inside the *haat*, their behaviour and topics of discussion. However, they still greet each other and offer tea, snacks and betel leaf. These social interactions can be found in the open floor of common facility building. One elderly Bangladeshi visitor named Md. Abdul Karim of Mokamiya was resting along with his grandchildren on the open floor of the common facility building during afternoon and one Indian Hindu lady Smt. Sumitra Das of Krishnagar village was sitting nearby along with her married daughter and grandchildren. They were discussing their residence, marketing, family matters, she inquired about the villages of that locality where her relatives and kin stayed. During their talk, she offered him betel leaf and he accepted it gladly.

The other instance is of a middle-aged man of Chhagalnaiya who studied in the bordering secondary school in Krishnagar and who never saw his classmates and teachers since the barbed fencing was erected. Upon hearing about the *Border Haat*, he was eager for a reunion with his school friends and teachers. Ultimately his dream was fulfilled through this *haat*. He told it was one of the happiest days of his life, with tears in his eyes. A Bengali family of Kolkata came to this *haat*

with relatives of Tripura to meet with other relatives in Bangladesh. Before this, they kept in touch through cell phones only.

Cases of theft and unwelcome activities

Theft of articles from Indian shops is a very common phenomenon and all shopkeepers are worried about it and engage people to guard their shops. Sometimes, the thieves are caught red handed and handed over to the BSF. Then BSF in turn handed over the miscreants to police custody and lodged a case for theft. Thieves from the Bangladesh side of the *haat* are handed over to the BGB. Sometimes, buyers of both the countries use fake Rs. 500 and Rs. 1000 notes (old).

Many Bangladeshi vendors sell dry fish, duck, plastic items, herbal medicines, *joributi*, massage oil, *tabij*, *kabach* along with metal rings with or without stone and some Indian vendors sell green coconuts, bananas, tea and snacks. Sometimes, Custom officers ask these people to leave with their goods like grafted fruit plants (mango and other fruits), ducks and other prohibited items. One Muslim boy sold betel leaf on foot around the *haat*.

Time	Estimated population in <i>haat</i>				Main activities in brief
	Vendees		Buyers/ Visitors		
	India (total vendees: 27)	Bangladesh (total vendees: 27)	India	Bangladesh	
8.45am	-	-	-	-	BSF personnel & officers of BOP came and performed their duties at two entry gates (India).
9.00am	-	-	-	-	Counter opened and entry pass issuing started, people began gathering along with goods (India), with the BSF monitoring the movements of both vehicles and people.
10.30 am	-	-	-	-	Vendees queued up in front of first double-barbed fencing.
11.00am	-	-	-	-	Opened the first gate; BSF started checking and allowed vendees till the gate of the <i>haat</i> .
11.05am	-	-	-	-	Opened gate of border <i>haat</i> , BSF checking started, vendees entered inside <i>haat</i> premises; money exchange office of Bangladesh opened.
11.15am	20	12	-	-	Vendees arranged their goods.
11-30am	27	24	-	-	Visitors and buyers started entering the <i>haat</i> .
12.30pm	-	-	408	652	People exchanged currencies.

01.30pm	-	-	1032	1442	Peak hours for purchase and trading of goods. Some visitors rest and gossip with known people in common facility building. BDO, Poangbari, and SDM, Feni district, visited the <i>haat</i> ; visitors and buyers started to exit the <i>haat</i> .
02.30pm		1306	1623		
03.30pm	-	-	1353	1662	
04.00pm	-	-	353	507	Peak hour for exit of buyers and visitors from both gates, whistle blown by BSF to pack up.
04.15pm	23	18	287	250	Penultimate whistle, vendees started leaving.
04.30pm	0	0	0	0	No one is allowed in <i>haat</i> premises except security personnel.
04.45pm					BSF & BGB closed the gates of their respective sides with lock and key.

[Source: Fieldwork ; Data collected on 21st July, 2015]

Table 6: Presence in *Border Haat*

Comparison of vendors, vendees and sale

Let's look at a comparative picture of vendors and vendees who entered the *haat* as well as the total turnover on each market day by nationality. Table 6 shows 10 market days from the opening day on 20th January 2015 to 24th March 2015.

Date	Indian side				Bangladesh side			
	Vendors entered for trading		No. of vendees entered	Total sold by vendors (Rs.)	Vendors entered for trading		No. of vendees entered	Total sold by vendors (Rs.)
	No. of vendors	Value of goods (Rs.)			No. of vendors	Value of goods (Rs.)		
20.01.2015	21	490000	640	106350	18	-	211	102070
27.01.2015	21	881400	818	253000	20	-	350	168000
03.02.2015	23	904800	1044	382000	21	-	682	165200
10.02.2015	25	1660000	1280	446550	21	339150	290	216500
17.02.2015	25	400000	1473	-	25	-	1213	375000
24.02.2015	25	1687000	1211	721000	25	420000	1184	215900
03.03.2015	25	2003000	1192	1281000	25	985000	1250	337000
10.03.2015	25	2225000	-	758000	25	550000	1168	289000
17.03.2015	25	2423000	1241	810000	27	560000	1153	589000
24.03.2015	25	2500000	1275	684000	27	511500	1172	198200

Table7: Detailed information on market days {from 20th January to 24th March 2015}.

From Table 7, it is seen that the number of vendors gradually increases from 21 to 25 in India and 18 to 27 in Bangladesh. Average number of vendees and average

sales by Indian vendors is higher (10,174 vendees and Rs.5, 44,190 of goods sold) than Bangladesh (8673 vendees and Rs. 2, 65,587 of goods sold).

Date	Indian side				Bangladeshi side			
	Vendors entered for trading		No. of vendees entered	Sales by vendors (Rs.)	Vendors entered for trading		No. of vendees entered	Sales by vendors (Rs.)
	No. of vendors	Value of goods sold (Rs.)			No. of vendors	Value of goods sold (Rs.)		
31.3.2015	25	1920000	1380	550300	27	480000	1185	250300
07.4.2015	27	2508000	1585	673000	27	512000	1243	260000
14.4.2015	27	2605000	1725	720400	27	57000	1345	289000
21.4.2015	27	2045000	1665	656000	27	475000	1356	234000
28.4.2015	27	2005000	1789	120000	27	353400	1726	264500
05.5.2015	27	3460000	1772	765000	27	572500	1189	325500
12.5.2015	27	2388000	1517	855500	27	412000	1114	293000
19.5.2015	27	2582500	1834	970400	27	452000	1223	312000
26.5.2015	27	2582000	1775	930000	27	420000	1243	356000
12.6.2015	27	2820000	1257	815000	27	394000	1179	282000
09.6.2015	27	2646000	1185	980000	27	389000	1192	320000
16.6.2015	27	2540000	1202	750000	27	372000	1145	298000
23.6.2015	24	2642000	1237	692000	23	392000	1113	197200
30.6.2015	27	2582300	1468	981000	27	353300	1185	225000
07.7.2015	27	2720000	1729	1132000	27	395000	1225	322000
14.7.2015	27	2550000	1602	816000	27	289000	1192	224000
21.7.2015	27	2625000	700	695000	27	323000	1275	210000

Table 8: Detailed information of market days [from 31st March to 21st July 2015].

Table 8 depicts the detailed information on market days, from 31st March to 21st July 2015. Barring one instance, each market day has seen 27 vendors from Bangladesh. Barring two instances, the number of Indian vendors has been the same. The outliers from the Indian side were 31st March 2015 (when 25 Indian vendors attended), and 23rd June 2015 (when the Indian and Bangladeshi vendors numbered 24 and 23, respectively). The average number of vendees and the average sales by vendors of India is also higher (1,495.41 vendees and Rs. 7, 70,682.35 worth of goods sold) than Bangladesh (1,242.94 vendees and Rs. 2, 74,264.70 worth of goods sold).

Opinions and suggestions: vendors, vendees, visitors and administrators

Both vendees and visitors mention that development of infrastructural facility is

essential. For example, during the hot summer days, people face acute problems due to the water scarcity in lavatories and for drinking. Arrangement of drinking water, cleanliness of toilets, electricity in the stalls should be provided properly. There is improper and insufficient space for resting in summer afternoons. As a result, people get sick due to the extreme heat. Therefore, it is essential to build a separate place for the people to rest as well as to protect themselves from rain and heat. Drainage system is required in fish stalls. There should be dustbins in the market and at least two garbage pits on the eastern and western boundaries of the *haat*, with proper disposal from time to time. Digital clocks should be displayed in different corners of the *haat*, displaying the layout of the *haat* and emergency phone numbers. A public address system is also essential for any kind of announcement such as the closing time of the market. Installation of fire extinguishers in common facility building, established STD or ISD booth inside or outside the *haat*, first aid and emergency medical treatment are essential. Close-circuit cameras should be installed for security and to prevent illegal activities inside the market premises. Also, underage boys and girls (below 14 years) should be stopped from any kind of involvement in business. Polythene bags should be prohibited inside the *haat*. Outside the *haat*, there should be a shade, toilet and drinking water facilities for car drivers and build a concrete parking space for parking on a pay-and-use basis.

Many Indian vendors and vendees suggested that the *haat* should be bi-weekly to allow unemployed educated youths as vendors. Even many of them suggested that present stall area should be divided into two for accommodation of more stalls. Billing system for any purchase is essential. There is a lack of information of visitors/vendees in entry pass and not all the points fulfilled properly. Therefore, it should follow a uniformity like in India, where detailed information about the visitors/vendees are mentioned.

The vendors of Bangladesh are facing an acute problem due to the condition of the muddy approach road. During the rainy season, they have to suffer poor transportation, which increases the carrying cost. Vendors of both countries demand a branch of a national bank for money transaction.

One buyer of Bangladesh visited the *haat* along with his family. He is an Air Force personnel who resides in Dhaka. He opined that the concept of the *Border Haat* is unique because it gave him the opportunity to meet with his relatives and kin members who are living in India and to purchase Indian goods, which are of good quality and less adulterated. A first aid set up is.

Mr. R. K. Noatia, Addnl. District Magistrate of South Tripura district, claimed that illegal trading is reducing gradually, and agreed that people demand bi-weekly *haats* for more trading, more source of income for unemployed youth and more interaction with people of both the countries. This would also help achieve the objectives of the *Border Haat*. Mr. Babul Debnath, Inspector, Land Customs Station, Belonia, Mr. Maniklal Das, DBO, Poangbari reported that the lack of manpower is

the main problem to run the *Border Haat* smoothly.

Conclusion

The establishment of a *Border Haat* in between two countries is not an easy task. It has a very lengthy administrative correspondence between the two countries through various Departments and Ministries. The Srinagar-Chhagalnaiya *Border Haat* is well accepted by the local people of both the countries for its social and economic significance. People enjoy it as a fair place. All administrative officials give attention to the *haat* and local people also co-operate with them for a smooth running. The *Border Haat* is gradually becoming well-known through people in both countries for its social and economic significance. As a result, a few families of both the countries took this opportunity to meet in the market place after a long absence. These people are very satisfied with this opportunity.

All vendors of both the countries are male. Buyers from Bangladesh are eager to purchase Indian goods and commodities due to non-availability or scarcity in their locality, for good quality, variety of designs, as well as taste and durability. They also reported that the adulteration of food items in Bangladesh is more than in India. The manufacturing and expiry dates of Indian goods printed on the packaging are more authentic than Bangladeshi goods as they have experienced. Therefore, Indian vendors make the most sales while most of the buyers are from Bangladesh. The Bangladeshi buyers are very fond of purchasing bananas and green coconuts in spite of the production in their country. The Indian buyers mainly purchase various types of barbed fishes, sweet water fishes, crabs, prawn, *hilsa* and dried fish, both sweet water and sea varieties. Sometime visitors and vendees come to the *haat* in groups from distant places in both India and Bangladesh. The highest numbers of vendees are found on main Muslim festivals and the most sales occur on occasions like *Eid*. Local people of both the countries purchase tax-free commodities within the permissible value of \$100 or equivalent to Indian/Bangladeshi currency, to reduce cross-border illegal practices. It is also pointed that there is local handicraft products like bamboo articles and textile items are not sold in the *haat*.

The Indo- Bangladesh *Border Haat* is not like a typically traditional village *haat*. There are a lot of restrictions, prescribed rules and regulations for the sellers in terms of their fixed numbers, people who may be allowed to sell, the listed commodities that may be sold, the currency, and the scheduled time and market day. Buyers and visitors also follow schedule times; purchase a particular quantity of commodities within a fixed value. These prescribed restrictions are sometimes troublesome to buyers but sometimes dishonest people exploit these rules.

Border Haat is a newly built network of people around an international border, which is helpful for their economic upliftment as well as continued social relations. It is a great opportunity for the people of India and Bangladesh to meet each other in a common ground after erection of the barbed fencing. This helps in developing

a social relationship which in turn may have a positive impact on the international relationship between the two countries as well. Many farmers, truck owners, drivers, owner of bicycle-stands and motor cycle-stands earn money on market days. The main purpose of the *Border Haat* are partially successful in that they have reduce the illegal activities, continued harbouring social relationships and develop the economic condition of the people. Therefore, this *Border Haat* is a successful venture and looks forward to further help the people of both the countries. It is more successful in every aspect than the Kamalasar *Border Haat* in Sipaijala district of Tripura and Tarapur *Border Haat* in Brahmanbaria district of Bangladesh.

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Description of photographs on *Border Haat*

Plate No.	Photo	Description	Plate No.	Photo	Description
1.		Pillar No. 2195 6-S, Indo-Bangladesh Border	15.		Rule and Regulation Display – Tripura Government
2.		Foundation Stone of Border Haat on 3.11.2013	16.		Noon time of the Border Market-Bangladesh Stalls
3.		Approach road of Border Haat-Bangladesh side	17.		Plastic items-Bangladesh side
4.		Entry gate-Bangladesh side	18.		Fishes-Bangladesh
5.		Gate II-Indian side	19.		Bangladeshi Customers in Garment stall– Indian side
6.		Money Exchange Counter of Bangladesh	20.		Grocery shop-Indian side
7.		Inagural Function of Indo-Bangladesh Border Haat on 13 January,2015	21.		Customs officer visiting Haat-from Indian side
8.		Border Haat Inauguration Stone Laid by Commerce Ministers of India and Bangladesh in Gracious Presence of Chief Minister of Tripura	22.		Hindu woman (India) offering betel Leaf to Muslim (Bangladesh)

9.		One Section of Gathering in inauguration of Border Haat.	23.		Taking selfie in Border Haat
11.		Visitor's Ticket for Borer Haat-Indian side			
12.		Vendor's ticket for Border Haat-Indian side			
13.		Entry Pass for Border Haat-Bangladesh side			
14.		National ID- Bangladesh			

