POLITICAL ECONOMY OF THE VESTED PROPERTY ACT IN RURAL BANGLADESH

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In our part of the world, the process of communal disharmony, disruption and disintegration started with the evil spirited “two nation theory” and was further institutionalized through the enactment of the Enemy property Act by the Pakistan regime during the 1965 Indo-Pak war. This law persists even today under a new nomenclature, the Vested Property Act, through the content of the law remains basically unchanged. The multidimensional impact of these relevant Acts on the life of Hindu minorities has never been studied in-depth. Our exploration on the subject shows that mass out-migration, dispossession of huge amounts of land and other assets, breaking of family ties, loss of human potential, disruption in social capital formation, and the formation of parasitic vested interest groups are some of the major impacts.

In order to ensure the development of a healthy socio-political environment we should get rid of all black laws hindering communal harmony. The Vested property Act, as an encroachment on the law of inheritance is an anti-humanitarian and anti-constitutional act, and thereby should be abolished. The government, secular-democratic political forces, development organizations and all individuals should work together to usher in a new era of communal harmony as a basic precondition for the development of a truly secular-democratic nation state in Bangladesh.