**Question 1. How does the idea of citizenship as social closure help us understand the alienation of the indigenous population within the territory of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh?** (Use Brubaker and Balibar’s analytical framework to formulate your answer). (Word Limit: 750, Marks: 10)

The term "indigenous people" refers to communities with distinct social and cultural identities that set them apart from dominant societal groups. Bangladesh has indigenous people, who happen to face obstacles and struggles in terms of citizenship resulting in alienation. By utilizing the frameworks developed by Balibar and Brubaker, we hope to put into perspective the alienation that the indigenous people of the People's Republic of Bangladesh experience.

A fundamental component of the modern political environment is citizenship, whereby each state formally defines its citizenry and categorizes individuals as either citizens or noncitizens (Brubaker, 1992). Citizenship refers to belonging to an organization that a contemporary state provides rather than just residency. This distinction serves as the foundation for the state's legitimacy to represent and further the interests of a nation.

**Social closer:**

The concept of social closure, as articulated by Max Weber discusses the idea of social closure as limiting or restricting access to social interactions or privileges to certain outsiders. Subsequently, indigenous populations in Bangladesh face social closure resulting in not having proper access to education, employment, and everyday life (Quader, 2008). Moreover, their challenges continue in issues like the restoration of authority and functions to the Chittagong Hill Tracts institutions, the maintenance of the tribal area's distinctive features, and the demilitarization of the area (IWGIA - International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs, 2023). Their situation shares similar characteristics with Balibar’s (2015) idea of passive citizenship of women during the French Revolution.

Despite a peace accord a decade ago, tensions persist in the Chittagong Hill Tracts due to past conflicts between indigenous groups and government forces, occasionally involving reported human rights abuses which have increased the alienation (Quader,2008). As the resistance keeps building up, the term negative community emerges mentioned by Balibar (2015) which is when a peaceful protest of a group against exclusion takes a turn into a riot, resulting in exclusion in the form of passive citizenship.

According to Balibar (2015), People become part of a territory by being in the same community. Additionally, when the different communities lack mutual recognition, it can lead to exclusion. In contrast, Brubaker (1992) defined territorial closure as people being forced to leave certain territories losing access to all related opportunities and services. Evidently, fewer options for indigenous populations to assimilate into mainstream society and limited legal protection to prevent their land invasion are the results of their territorial closure.

Indigenous people of Bangladesh are marginalized due to their ethnicity. As explained by Brubaker (1992), modern states aim to be associated with a particular group of people belonging to a particular nation, not just with a piece of land. Subsequently, ethnocultural closure can occur through the direct exclusion of particular groups, such as the indigenous people of Bangladesh who are excluded from certain rights due to their ethnicity.

Domestic closure, on the other hand, is a concept of the nation-state, whose membership is restricted and exclusive (Brubaker, 1992). In fact, the state's conceptual and legal maintenance of a border between its indigenous and non-indigenous citizens can be understood as a manifestation of this closure, which is reflected in the exclusion and discrimination experienced by our indigenous population. Undoubtedly, they are being internally excluded as Balibar (2015) discusses when certain people inside a country get the feeling of not belonging because of being treated differently or having their rights within certain limits.

Citizenship-based closure is formal and regulated by articulated norms. However, it may overlap with informal closure against ethnocultural nonnationals, where enforcement is biased by informal factors (Brubaker, 1992). Although citizenship is meant to be impartial, indigenous people frequently experience discrimination because of their cultural identity. Besides, a dynamic aspect of Balibar (2015) shows exclusion can be not just physically separating a community but also being excluded from participation in economic activities, communication, and mobility.

According to Brubaker (1992), citizenship can be used as a tool for closure by restricting access to the status of citizenship to a certain group while bestowing certain rights to another. Furthermore, alienation occurs for indigenous populations in Bangladesh as they are excluded from full civic participation due to the restrictive ascription of citizenship and differences in the naturalization of policies. Additionally, while some populations benefit from citizenship, indigenous communities may face challenges as it becomes a locally exclusive rather than a universal right. This complex relationship illustrates the dual character of citizenship discussed by Balibar (2015), where the very universal ideals that are supposed to bring people together frequently coexist with practices that exclude certain populations.

Indigenous communities’ persistent struggle for rights underscores the ethnocultural, territorial, and domestic closures faced by them. Utilizing Brubaker and Balibar's frameworks, we explored the impact of citizenship on such social closures resulting in their alienation. Even though citizenship is supposed to be impartial, it frequently collides with cultural identity, leading to biased enforcement and increased alienation of the country's indigenous populations.

***References***

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