

Minority Rights...Gujarat or elsewhere

A mature democracy does not merely speak about numerical victories and numbers it should be concerned about the rights of the last, displaced minority...since the mid 1980s and 1990s when countries and nations saw that despite the existence of some constitutional safeguards majorities often turned on religious minorities, horrific attacks on persons and properties apart, a majoritarianism has crept into our Democracy that national parties who thrive on selective citizenship rarely acknowledge. The Sikh Farmer issue in Kutch falls squarely within this framework. The Gujarat government is willing to move heaven and earth, and spends crores of rupees on legal fees (all the legal eagles that spout support for M are NOT doing pro bono work!!!) and yet yje NOISY NEWSHOUR on Times Now, CNN IBN, NDTV is unlikely to debate this issue.

NO channels discussed what Dr Sen said about M "minorities experience fear with such a man"...Why ?

ALL CHANNELS dismissed the secular communal divide as sloganeering not even bothering to deal with the fundamentals that Our republic is based on..

Question for them this Monday morning...will they deal with the SIKH FARMER ISSUE IN KUTCH ? Will they call the displaced Sikh Farmer, Revenue Minister Anandibehn Patel, Collector of Kutch, former Minister Sureshbhai Mehta and have the courage to DEBATE this issue ? If not why NOT ?

Partisan journalism is Poor Journalism.....

Teesta Setalvad

<http://www.indianexpress.com/news/fearing-displacement-sikh-farmers-settled-in-kutch-approach-punjab-cm/1150941/>

## Fearing displacement, Sikh farmers settled in Kutch approach Punjab CM

[Syed Khaliq Ahmed](#) : Ahmedabad, Sun Aug 04 2013, 02:47 hrs

Over 2,000 Sikh farmers settled in Kutch are mobilising political support from outside the state to build pressure on the Narendra Modi government and to ensure that they are not evicted from the land they have been cultivating for several decades.

Sikh farmers, who first landed in this bordering district after 1965 India-Pak war, are now settled across Bhuj, Lakhpat, Abdasa, Mandvi and Anjar talukas, owning thousands of acres of agricultural land.

It is believed that they have converted large tracts of land in this arid zone into fertile agricultural tracts. They faced no problem till two years ago when the state government ordered "freezing" of their land under provisions of the Bombay Tenancy and Agricultural Lands Act, 1958, disabling them from selling, buying or taking any loan or subsidy on their land.

Subsequently, these farmers were not issued certified copies of their land records or what's known in local revenue parlance, "7/12 utara", a proof of their ownership of the land. It is on the basis of this document that farmers can sell or transfer their land or take loans and subsidy. The farmers fear that with this order, they may be denied water to their agricultural land by the local irrigation cooperative societies formed by the state government and thus, forcing them to vacate the land on their own.

The farmers challenged the order in the Gujarat High Court and the latter decided in their favour five months ago. Two months ago, the state government moved the Supreme Court.

Dharam Singh, a Sikh farmer from Lakhpat taluka, said that he and several others recently met Punjab Chief Minister Parkash Singh Badal and Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee president Avtar Singh Makkar in this regard. He said that a delegation also called on the National Commission for Minorities to take up the matter with the state government.

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/rajkot/Minority-panel-takes-up-Sikh-farmers-issue-in-Kutch-with-Guj-govt/articleshow/20821884.cms?inttarget=no>

# Minority panel takes up Sikh farmers' issue in Kutch with Guj govt

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GANDHINAGAR: [National Commission for Minorities](#) (NCM) has asked [Gujarat government](#) to take steps to prevent displacement of [Sikh farmers](#) in Kutch.

A member of the commission, Ajaib Singh, met chief secretary Varesh Sinha on Friday and demanded that the Gujarat government honour the high court verdict in the matter and withdraw the case filed by it in the Supreme Court. The matter was first reported in TOI.

The Sikh farmers from Kutch claim that the Gujarat high court has already ruled in their favour in the case pertaining to the government putting a freeze on land holdings of hundreds of farmers by invoking the Bombay Tenancy and Agricultural Lands Act, 1948 through the local administration since 2010.

There are around 10,000 farmers in Kutch who came from Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan and settled there. They claim to have all the documents of the lands purchased by them and along with Kisan credit cards, electricity bills, etc.

After meeting the chief secretary, Singh said, "These farmers were invited by former Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri after the 1965 war to come and settle in Kutch as this would help in development of the region and also in guarding the border with Pakistan. Now when they have turned the land fertile by sheer hard work and are producing cotton and fruits on this land they are being asked to vacate it. Why should they do so?"

Sinha told TOI, "We have said that the matter is sub judice as it is still pending in the Supreme Court."

The farmers have been trying to meet chief minister [Narendra Modi](#) on the matter but their efforts have proved futile. They question that what was the need for Gujarat government to approach the apex court on a pro people decision of the high court?

These farmers had last year approached Punjab chief minister [Prakash Singh Badal](#) and had got him to write to Modi on the issue. They had recently approached the NCM.