



BOOK REVIEW: BANGLADESH IN BLOOD AND TEARS: A GLIMPSE OF THE POLITICS OF BANGLADESH

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Bangladesh in blood and tears: A glimpse of the politics of Bangladesh. By Jyoti Sen Gupta: Publisher: Naya Prakash (Calcutta, 2006), x + 158 Page.

7.1 INTRODUCTION:

From the very history of Bangladesh, it can be listed with those South Asian nations, who have been struggling to set up a stable political environment. The Post-independence political history of Bangladesh can be related with an endless board game between Democracy and Military rule. The ongoing situation of the nation has been constructed by several political assassinations and the Coup D'états.* To understand the post-independence political history of Bangladesh, it should be remarked that the economic backbone of Bangladesh is still not relieved from the endless circle of foreign aids and debts. Simultaneously the nation has been struggling against the terrific web of Smuggling and political Coup D'états. In the very beginning, we have to introduce one of the darkest faces of the foreign policies of Bangladesh. From the very independence of the nation, it has been regarded as one of the possible hotspots for Islamic terrorism, which have been assisted by the demographic structure of the nation. Highly celebrated author Jyoti Sen Gupta, in his book 'Bangladesh in Blood and Tears' have

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mentioned this stigma as: *“The Pro-Pakistan ruling powers will not allow a relation of peace with India. Therefore, India has to be extremely vigilant and play a correct diplomatic card which should be to convince the Bangladesh people in the vast rural areas and in urban intellectual societies that Indian policy is for true friendship with them.”*[†]

The decade and a half long civil war and the chronology of bloodshed can be regarded as the prime factor to set up the political instabilities and the fragile economy of the nation. A couple of serious mistakes have been launched by the foreign policy makers of Bangladesh. Author Sen Gupta in his highly popular book ‘Bangladesh in blood and tears’ have discussed those ‘mistakes’ as well as the position of Bangladesh in terms of foreign policy making through an unbiased habit of writing. As a rule, the foreign policy based literatures are often proved to be a study of boring chronological discussion, but it is the potentiality of the author that he did not let the book down under this criteria. This book is a well-readable masterpiece for those, who want to study the very idea of ‘South Asia’.

7.2: THE POLITICS OF SOUTH ASIA & THE POSITION OF BANGLADESH:

Except the case of India, most of the South Asian nations have been penduluming between democracy and military coup. The nations like Cambodia and Myanmar have not been able to experience the taste of democracy. Due to the political instabilities, despite of having a huge economic possibility, the region has not gained the much attention from the investors, due to which the region has been experiencing a serious vacuum of national bourgeoisies. A selective capitalist class has been monopolizing the internal market system of those nations. These political instabilities are converting the high dreams and desires of the South Asian people to an endless route of frustration and depression.

The post-independence history of Bangladesh is the history of endless foreign debts and a never-stopping smuggling of ‘Taka’s. The nations like Malaysia, Canada, etc. have been kindling the trend of international smuggling by launching the schemes like ‘Second home’. As for example, we can broach the ‘Begum Para’ villa of Toronto city of Canada, which is

* Coup D’etat is a French term to explain the sudden change of high political orders. Source of the Word: Borkotoky, Satyen: Napoleon Bonaparte, Bhabani Books, March, 2018, Page: 69

[†]Introduction, *Bangladesh in Blood and Tears*, Gupta, Jyot Sen,



known for the rich families of Bangladeshi politicians.[‡] Due to the trend of endless smuggling, the national capital of Bangladesh has been degrading day by day. This is resulting with a heavy continuing tide of brain drain. But on the other hand, the economic possibilities of Bangladesh are just unimaginable. Sen Gupta remarked the pendulum situation of Bangladesh between the economic possibilities and realities as: “Bangladesh is the country with some of the world’s most fertile land also the home of some world’s most hungriest people.”[§]

7.3 A DECADE AND A HALF OF THE INDEPENDENT BANGLADESH: SOME SERIOUS MISTAKES:

Bangladesh got her independence in the mid of a very kid gloving situation of the world politics. Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman by taking military aid from India have succeeded to liberate the nation from the cage of undemocratic rulers of Pakistan. In this case, author Sen Gupta pointed out the bias character of Bangabandhu between his two faces, the revolutionary and the statesman. He was not as proficient as the situation demanded to be. For example, it can be broached that despite having world’s most fertile lands, Bangladesh is still fighting to serve its people by supplying enough food materials. The nation is depending upon the kindness of UN and other foreign nations to fill the stomach of its people. Sen Gupta quoted the highly celebrated work of Lawrence Lifschultz ‘Bangladesh- The unfinished revolution’ as he mentioned that from the very beginning, the foreign policy of Bangladesh was not stable. During the Cold war era, Bangladesh in the same time, tried to be a member state of NAM as well as tried to maintain a good relation with the two super powers, due to which the nation had failed to gain trust from any of them.**

On the other hand, the journey of Bangabandhu, from Awami League to ‘BAKSAL’**, the shifting ideological stand of the leader can be noticed. During the freedom movement, Banga bandhu expressed his ideological position by supporting Progressive Secularism, while after the independence, gradually he shifted to Islamic communalism. This ideological track

[‡] *Safety away from home*, Rahman, Sajjadur, <https://thedailystar.net/frontpage/safety-away-from-home-10488%3famp>, Access Date: 19.08.2019

[§] *Bangladesh in Blood and Tears*, Gupta, Jyot Sen, Page: 12

** Ibid, Page: 20-25

** BAKSAL stands for the ‘Bangladesh Krishak-Sramik Awami League’.



change of the supreme leader can be regarded as the prime factor behind the uprising of Pan-Islamism and the pitiable condition of Bangladesh in terms of foreign policy. ^{††}

7.4 A CHRONOLOGY OF POLITICAL ASSASSINATIONS AND THE INVOLVEMENT OF CIA:

The assassination of Sheikh Mujhibor Rahman and his family changed the political environment of Bangladesh. Though Rahman had stepped some serious wrong steps, but he never crossed the borderline of democracy. Journalist AKA author Sen Gupta accused with enough evidences that CIA was involved with the assassination of Rahman. It should be remarked that during the cold war, USA did not desire for a pro-Russian nation, which was just near about to India. On the other hand, the geo-political location of Bangladesh made the nation very crucial for both Pakistan and India. The home ministry of Bangladesh was not too mature to stand alone in this crucial epoch and that's why CIA succeeded to intervene into the internal politics of the nation. Pradip Chery, the then chief agent of CIA of its Dacca branch said, *“Our communication there (Dacca) is so good that we were able to get the information of the coup back to the US very clearly.”*^{†††}

After this assassination, the foreign policy of Bangladesh had shifted to Pro-American as well as Pro-Pakistani. Author Sen Gupta remarked with contrite, *“The situation in Bangladesh has, therefore, changed totally from what it was after winning independence. It remains an independent country but as colonial bastion of Pakistan and USA. Being CIA or CIA-backed affiliated institutions with pro-American training, they would never allow any president of Prime Minister to remain truly independent and non-aligned. Zia as a former freedom fighter, perhaps only one in the administration, had failed to realise the truth..”*^{§§}

The assassination of Sheikh Mojhibur Rahman was not the last political assassination. After the assassination, BAKSAN by creating the ‘Jatiya Sangram Parishad’, called for a national movement (Jatiya Sangram). As an immediate reaction to the call, the government started to kill each and all leaders and workers of BAKSAL. Just after Rahman, the nation lost

^{††} Ibid, Page: 1-4

^{†††} Ibid, Page: 54

^{§§} Ibid, Page: 87



another gem, the first working vice president Soyed Najrul Islam, the one who could rebuild the country in a right track.

The post-assassination political environment of the nation was so predictable. In the year of 1978, Zia Junta's government converted the structure of the nation to A presidential one. Zia Junta handed over all the powers to his own hand. Gradually the diplomatic relations with China and Pakistan started to influence on the market system of the nation and that's how the nation became an open market field for China. During the regime of Ziaur Rahman, the Muslim League succeeded to enter into the nation and through the coming of Muslim League, the Pan-Islamic sensation began to sensitize, which was not desired by anyone, who fond of democracy.

Through the last phases of the book, author Gupta mentioned the devastating economic scenario of the country. He mentioned that the Bangladeshi economy began to depend upon the foreign aids. For example, during 1976, 54% of the total economy of the nation was comprised by foreign aids whereas in 1980, it was increased to 77% .^{***} The devastating socio-economic scenario during the Zia's regime was described by the author as, "Zia had hardly any desk work. He had to run to China, to Saudi Arabia and other countries, for what? For help, with the basket in his hand. Within the country there were no peace."^{†††}

7.5 CONCLUSION: WHY THIS BOOK IS IMPORTANT?

Author Sen Gupta introduced us about the decade and a half long bloodshed and critical political scenario of Bangladesh. To till the Hasina's regime, the cloud has not been moved away. The rise of Pan-Islamism and the never-ending route of smuggling has not been stopped to chase the nation and it creates a historical tide of brain drain.

Without Bangladesh, the politics of South Asia is just unimaginable. The importance of the nation is somewhere more than to be a tag of war between India, China and Pakistan, but has an unimaginable future potentiality. To uncover the facts of the decade and a half long civil war of the nation, the book is not only important, but also crucial too.

^{***}Ibid, Page: 141

^{†††}Ibid, Page: 143