



International Multilingual Research Journal

MAH/MUL/03051/2012
ISSN-2319 9318

V i d y a P r a s a r a k

Special Issue, 5th December-2017

Maratha Vidya Prasarak Samaj's Nashik

Arts & Commerce College, Taharabad,

Tal.Baglan, Dist.Nashik (M.S.)

Department of Political Science
&



Yashwantrao Chavan Pratishthan, Phule Pune University, (Maharashtra)



Published on the Occasion of State Level One Day Seminar

**Changing Dimension of India's
Foreign Policy : An Evaluation**



Prof.B.S.Mahale

Coordinator & Executive Editor

Dr.M.L.Sali

Principal & Editor in Chief

ICAC Received
Borewar
20/04/2018



December 2017, Special Issue

Maratha Vidya Prasarak Samaj's
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Harshwardhan Publication Pvt.Ltd.

Reg.No.U74120 MH2013 PTC 251205

At.Post.Limbaganesh,Tq.Dist.Beed
Pin-431126 (Maharashtra) Cell:07588057695,09850203295
harshwardhanpubli@gmail.com, vidyawarta@gmail.com

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INDIA- BANGLADESH RELATIONS IN 21 st CENTURY

Prof. Rajendra Vishwanath Pawar
G.M.D. Arts B.W. Commerce & Science
College Sinnar Dist Nashik
HOD Defence & Strategic Studies

Bangladesh and India are south Asian neighbours. India is a world second most population country. Whereas Bangladesh is the world eight most population. They are common members of SAARC, BIMSTEC, IORA and the commonwealth. Bangladesh is the India States of West Bengal to the West and North and Northeast Tripura and Mizoram to the east and by the Bay of Bengal to the South so the Bangladesh is surrounded three fourth by India and one Fourth by the by Bengal.

Bangladesh shares 4096 Km. of land border a vast maritime boundary. 54 common rivers with India. The importance geo-strategic and geo- economics consideration between North eastern states of India Bangladesh has played a significance role in determining the relationship between the two countries. Bangladesh shares 1879 Km border with the north-eastern States (NES) of India= Tripura 856 Km; Meghalaya 443 Km; Mizoram 318 Km and Assam 262 Km.

India and Bangladesh share a unique bound and a special relationship rooted in a common cultural heritage. Shared principals and value forged by aspirations and sacrifices of its people strengthening the historic bounds and impart of vision for the future that is durable and sustainable and conducive for collective prosperity of the region. India's relationship with

Bangladesh is moving in the direction from conflict to the corporation.

The aim of this paper is to analyze the geo strategic importance of Bangladesh, major irritants between India and Bangladesh and current development in India- Bangladesh relations.

Geo-strategic Importance of Bangladesh

Geo-strategic is not absolute but some of the ingredients or factors could be absolute and value could change with changing characters of variables. Geo-strategic is transparent yet perceptive. Therefore, one needs to understand the prevalent Geo-strategic reality in the global context in general and regional context in particular. One has to be clear in understanding as to how the global reality affects the region, such as Bangladesh, which is increasingly becoming an arena of middle power rivalry involving the long super power by one actor or another to counter balance the adversary.

In south Asia context, the region that India is directly concerned with, rapid geo-strategic changes have to be viewed in right perspective to understand the regional geo-strategic ambience, particularly by the policy makers of peripheral countries like Bangladesh. This is essential to make a comprehensive assessment of the regional dynamics.

Bangladesh is part of south Asia that continues to be one of the most volatile geo-strategic importance for India is due to four factors:

Bangladesh's location is a strategic cwnedge between mainland India and Northeastern seven states of the India UNION. Each of these States is land-locked and has shorter route to the sea through Bangladesh. Currently, Kolkata port is used by these states for both domestic and imported cargo. The navigable rivers in India's Northeast that could connect west Bengal or Orissa ports pass through Bangladesh. The only entry to and exit from the Northeastern region of India is through the Shiliguri Corridor that is close to the Chinese border and within striking distance of

Bangladesh. The Shiliguri Corridor is the most sensitive choke point for the Indian Union.

A friendly Bangladesh that ensures no anti India terror or insurgent activities can be carried out from its soil unlike in the past will substantially assist India in handling security problems in some of its restive north east States. Importantly, a neutral Bangladesh also ensures containment of an assertive china in this region, including along the strategic sea- lanes of the Bay of Bengal.

Bangladesh began to be referred to as the third Largest Muslim country in the world and as the second in the region.

Bangladesh is a natural pillar of Act East Policy of India because Bangladesh is being regarded as a bridge between India and East Asian countries also has enormous geographic advantages for its proximity to Myanmar and other East Asian nations to promote international economic political and security cooperation. Once connected via Asian Highway and Trans Asian Railway India and East Asian nations will be using Bangladesh as the main transit point to increase economic interaction amongst themselves.

Major Irritants between India and Bangladesh

India played significant great role in Bangladesh liberation war. India was the first country to recognize Bangladesh as separate state. However there are several main issues such as water dispute Chakma Refugees problem Border Fencing Dispute Illegal Migration and Role of Bangladesh in Northeast Insurgency etc. These have been major issues which have impacted on these two countries bilateral relation.

Water dispute

River water sharing has been one of the main irritant between India Bangladesh relations. India and Bangladesh share 54 big and trans boundary rivers. The major area of dispute has been India's construction and operation of the Farakka Barrage. In 1951 India announced

intentions to build a barrage across the Ganga River 10 km from the Bangladesh border. The aim of construction of the Farakka Barrage was to divert water into the Baghirathi Hooghly River to increase the lean period flow of river to increase the water depth at the Kolkata port which was threatened by siltation.

The Bangladesh government feels that the reduction in flow caused damage to agriculture industry and ecology in the basin in Bangladesh. Because of the inability of the concerned government to come to any lasting agreement over the last few decades on sharing the river water this problem has grown and now it is also viewed as a case of upstream downstream dispute.

The other reason for water disputes is Teesta River which has its source in Sikkim flows through the northern part of West Bengal in India before entering Bangladesh where after crossing through about 45 km of irrigable land merges with the Brahmaputra River.

Bangladeshi experts have said the massive dam will disrupt the seasonal rhythm of the river and have an adverse effect on downstream agriculture and fisheries. The government of Bangladesh has decided to send an expert team to the dam area to examine the features and likely impact of the dam on the flow of water onto the Surma and the Kushiara.

Chakma Refugees problem

The Chakmas are the tribal of the North eastern states of India. They are settled mainly in the states of Mizoram, Tripura Assam Arunachal Pradesh Meghalaya and West Bengal. They migrated from the Chittagong Hill tract of East Bengal to the Mizo hills. Chakmas follow Buddhism and have a language of Burmese stock and Sanskrit scripts. The Chakmas are the original inhabitants of the CHT and are perhaps the least known people of Asia being the residents of a remote and backward area which is of little political or economic consequence. This place has been the home

land of the Chakmas particularly for centuries.

There are no authentic figures available of the exact number of illegal migrants from Bangladesh into India. Their estimates vary from 12 million to 13 million. On August 2008 A. K. Mitra DG BSF mentioned that out of the Bangladeshi nationals who had come to India through West Bengal on valid travel documents between 1972 to 2005 nearly 12 lakh did not return to their country after expiry of their visa.

Recent Development in India- Bangladesh relations

India was the first country to recognize Bangladesh as a separate and independent state and established diplomatic relations with the country immediately after its independence in December 1971. India's links with Bangladesh are civilisational cultural social and economic. There is much that unites the Nehru the CHT should be with India and the Chakmas were ready to fight for this and would India help with arms Nehru got up in anger and shouted Do you propose to bring India under foreign rule again. That decision sounded the death knell for the hapless Chakmas. Thus the Chakmas had to unwillingly join Pakistan. The Chakma influx into India started just after the partition of the country. The first influx of the refugees took place shortly after partition when 40,000 Chakma families fled to India. India did not treat the Chakmas differently and resettled them in North India and later on in Northeast India. The manageable number of the Chakma refugees their widespread dispersal in the sparsely populated Northeast and ethnic proximity with locals largely mitigated any potential opposition from the indigenous population.

Border Fencing Dispute

Bangladesh has the highest growth rate of population in world but not able to provide basic amenities including food to its citizens. Therefore with the purpose of earning bread and butter Bangladesh citizen illegally cross over to the Indian side. Illegal Bangladesh migrants are

causing a big strain over the Indian economy and a threat to the Indian security. The border fencing proposal was first put forward by the Assam government in January 1965. In order to prevent illegal migration from across the border the Government of India had sanctioned the construction of fencing of border beyond the 150 yard zone within its own territory in line with the boundary agreement in two phases. The Indian government started border fencing project in 1989 and fencing was done in 854 km against the approved target of 857 km. The phase II involved 2429 km of the total 4096 km long border and 1907 km fencing was completed. Phase III was in Assam Dhubri district. Around 364 km of the fencing that was constructed as part of phase I of the project was replaced so far as the old fencing had become outdated and damaged at several portions. About 861 km of fencing constructed under phase I was replaced by March 2010 India had fenced 3300 km.

Role Of Bangladesh in Northeast Insurgency

Northeast India has been facing insurgency since 1956 when Naga conflict started in Nagaland. It is one of the oldest unresolved armed conflicts of the world. Currently over a dozen well established fundamentalist militant organizations are operating armed conflict in Northeast India. Most of them are mainly active in Assam. The armed insurgent groups in Assam like the United Liberation Front of Assam

The National Democratic Front of Bodoland, Kamtapur Liberation Organization, The Muslim United Liberation Tiger of Assam etc. have established training camps in Bangladesh and they also procure their weapons from Cox Bazar area near the Bangladesh Myanmar border.

Conclusion

It is a favorable time to move towards a deeper relationship between India and Bangladesh particularly in terms of India North East because Bangladesh adopted zero tolerance stance against terrorism and also explore greater connectivity. Including transit

and access to the Chittagong port. Energy cooperation is an area where there are enormous opportunities both at the bilateral as well as the regional levels. The India Bangladesh relationship does carry strong historical and cultural overtones both sides also realize the immense benefits of a strong relationship India is committed to carry forward the mission of strengthening the historic bonds and impart vision for the future that is durable and sustainable and conducive for the collective prosperity of the region. Both countries are keen to enhance connectivity not just between them but also with other countries in South Asia.

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भारताच्या परराष्ट्र धोरणांचे बदलते पैलू-मुल्यमापन “भारत – नेपाळ संबंधाचे बदलते पैलू”

प्रा. अभिन संपत पोटे
राज्यशास्त्र विभाग प्रमुख,
कला, वाणिज्य व विज्ञान महाविद्यालय,
सायखेडा, ता. निफाड, जि. नाशिक.

प्रस्तावना :

२०१४ मध्ये भारतात नरेंद्र मोदी यांचे पूर्ण बहुमत असणारे सरकार सत्तेत आले. मोदी यांच्या परराष्ट्र धोरणाचा विकास तीन टप्प्यांत होणार आहेत. पहिला टप्पा दक्षिण आशियाचा भारताच्या आपल्या सात शेजारी राष्ट्रांशी ज्यांना सार्क कंटीज म्हटले जाते त्यांच्याशी आपले संबंध घनिष्ठ कराचे आहेत. मोदींनी निवडणुक प्रचार दरम्यान काळात दक्षिण आशियातील विकासाचा आणि गरिबीचा प्रश्न हे दोन प्रश्न उचलून धरले होते. आपण दक्षिण आशियावर भर का देतो ? कारण भारताचा आर्थिक विकास आणि भारताची अंतर्गत सुरक्षितता ही भारताच्या शेजारील राष्ट्रांमधील शांतता, तेशील लोकशाहीचे अस्तित्व, राजकीय स्थैर्य व त्यांच्या आर्थिक विकासाशी निगडीत आहे. या राष्ट्रांमध्ये लोकशाही नांदली, शांतता प्रस्थापित झाली तर भारतात शांतता व स्थैर्य निर्माण होईल. कारण भारताच्या सीमा या राष्ट्रांना जोडलेल्या आहेत. शेजारी राष्ट्रांबरोबरच आर्थिक संबंध घनिष्ठ करण्यासाठी मोदी यांनी प्रथम भूतान व नंतर नेपाळ या राष्ट्रांची भेटीसाठी निवड केली. हे त्यांचे पहिले वर्तुळ आहेत. यानंतर त्यांनी दक्षिण पूर्व आशियाई राष्ट्रे आणि उत्तर पूर्व आशियाई राष्ट्रांशी संबंध विकसित करण्याचे ठरविले आहेत. यासाठी परराष्ट्र मंत्री सुपमा स्वराज या म्यानमार आणि