



## THE ROLE OF INDIA IN THE EMERGENCE OF BANGALADESH NATION AND RELATIONS BETWEEN TWO COUNTRIES-A STUDY

**Dr. B. Gopal Naik**

*Lecturer in Political Science, K H. Government Degree College, Dharmavaram, Sri Satya Sai District, A P. India.*

### **Abstract**

*Prime Minister Indira Gandhi has not only served the Indian nation, but the whole South Asian region. Indira Gandhi's foreign Relations is often directed purpose of ensuring national security. Foreign relations uses different strategies to guide its relations with other countries and international organizations, This means that foreign relations is made up to different global issues relationship with other countries, and even domestic politics.*

### **Introduction**

Bangladesh's emergence, after ending the 23 years of Pakistani exploitation, was the result of a unique uprising of the Bengali people who fought a heroic war for national independence in 1971. India stood solidly behind Bangladesh throughout the nine-month-long war and even recognised the new state on 6 December 1971, nine days before the war ended with the surrender of the 93,000 Pakistani troops in Dhaka on 16 December 1971, to the joint military command of the two countries.

Therefore, the relationship between the two countries is not merely a diplomatic one, but comes attached with a unique bond as India's Mitro Bahini fought shoulder-to-shoulder with the Bangladeshi forces, Mukti Bahini, and embraced martyrdom.

The unprecedented atrocities committed by the marauding Pakistani Army in 1971 led to a mass exodus to India, where an estimated 10 million people took refuge for nine months. India, under Indira Gandhi, opened its eastern borders allowing streams of refugees to take shelter. When the elected representatives of the former East Pakistan formed a government in exile, India helped settle the wartime government, and finally got involved in the war when faced attack from West Pakistan on its western borders. However, the diplomatic ties were further formalised when Prime Minister Indira Gandhi visited the newly formed country on 17 March 1972, days after Indian troops were withdrawn from Bangladeshi soil.

The emergence of Bangladesh was a major historical incident which occurred in the Indian sub-continent; after the Second World War and it affected the power balance in the sub-continent. The People's Republic of Bangladesh is surrounded by Indian Territory except for a short South-Eastern frontier with Burma.

The dismemberment of Pakistan after Indo-Pakistan war of 1971 helped in boosting India's image in the world as a supporter of genuine liberation struggles. The reasons for Indian interference in Pakistan's internal affairs were manifold, and the genesis of this problem lies in the historical past. The root cause of Indo-Pakistan trouble is that India never accepted the establishment of Pakistan.

When on 3<sup>rd</sup> December, 1971, Pakistan imposed war on India, the latter under the leadership of Mrs. Indira Gandhi, moved its armed forces into East Pakistan and with the help of Mukti Bahini liberated East Pakistan from the clutches of the West Pakistani military junta.



On 6<sup>th</sup> December, 1971, when the war was in full swing the Government of India granted recognition to the People's Republic of Bangladesh, while announcing the decision Mrs. Indira Gandhi further said that in future the governments and people of India and Bangladesh, who share common ideals and sacrifices, would forge a relationship based on the principles of mutual respect for each other's sovereignty, territorial integrity, non-interference in the internal affairs, equality and mutual benefits.

After the recognition, the first chancery of Bangladesh was formally opened in New Delhi on 9th December, 1971, when its green and golden flag was unfurled. Between the formal recognition and the opening, a movement was launched in East Pakistan against the delaying tactics of President Yahya and the circumstances compelled Mujib men to declare the sovereign republic of Bangladesh. By another agreement India decided to give at least Rs.1000 crores immediately to Bangladesh for undertaking a massive programme of reconstruction. Both the governments also finalized a detailed agreement which envisaged an annual trade of Rs. 1,000 crores.

To strengthen the relations with India, the foreign minister of Bangladesh, Abdus Samad Azad, paid on official visit to India from 5th to 9th January, 1972. He said that his government would follow the policy of non-alignment and both the governments agreed to base their relations on the principle of respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity of all states, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, and equality and mutual benefit.

Sheik Mujibur Rahman, the Prime Minister of Bangladesh on the invitation of the Mrs. Indira Gandhi paid a visit to India.

from 6<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> February, 1972. Both the leaders (India and Bangladesh) agreed that Indian forces would withdraw from Bangladesh by 25<sup>th</sup> March, 1972, and every means would be adopted to ensure the return of all refugees from India. They also expressed their determination to promote, in every possible way, co-operation between governments and people of the two countries inspired by a vision of lasting peace, amity and good neighbourlines.

### **Indo-Bangladesh Treaty**

On the lines of Indo-Soviet Treaty of peace, friendship and co-operation, signed in August, 1971, on 19<sup>th</sup> March, 1972, India and Bangladesh signed a 25 year treaty of friendship, co-operation and peace. It was signed by the Prime Minister Sheik Mujibur Rahman and Mrs. Gandhi and it committed the two countries to immediately enter into mutual consultations to take appropriate effective measures to eliminate the threat in case either party was attacked or threatened with an attack. The treaty was not a defense pact between India and Bangladesh, as is clearly evident from Article 9 which provided only consultations and other measures to check the threat and not the automatic interventions. Indo- Bangladesh treaty of co-operation, friendship and peace determined to maintain fraternal and good neighbourly relations and transform the border into a border of external peace and friendship.

After the liberation of Bangladesh, Government of India in order to establish the identity of Bangladesh and legitimize its role during the liberation war, associated Bangladesh in the talks with Pakistan on the prisoners of war issue.



The Simla agreement was welcomed by Bangladesh and the Prime Minister of Bangladesh strongly supported its objectives of reconciliation, good neighbourliness and establishment of durable peace in the sub-continent. The Government of Bangladesh took the plea that in the absence of recognition by Pakistan it was not possible to have tripartite talks to settle the humanitarian problems as Bangladesh could not participate in such a meeting except on the basis of sovereign equality. But on 17<sup>th</sup> April, 1973, India and Bangladesh took a major step with the intention of ending the deadlock on the humanitarian issues by setting aside the problem of recognition.<sup>10</sup> In February 1974, recognition of Bangladesh took place which facilitated the participation of Bangladesh in the tripartite meeting envisaged on the Delhi Agreement.

### **Friendship between Two countries**

After signing of the Indo- Bangladesh treaty, the friendship between India and Bangladesh started growing day by day. To strengthen the bonds of friendship, the President of Bangladesh Abu Sayeed Chowdhury arrived in New Delhi on 27<sup>th</sup> November 1972, on a ten day state visit. The President of Bangladesh had expressed "profound gratitude" to the government and the people of India for their open hearted generosity and assistance during and since the war of independence of Bangladesh.

In response to the invitation by President of Bangladesh, the President of India, Mr.V.V. Giri paid a five day official visit starting from 15<sup>th</sup> June, 1974 and addressed a special session of the Jatiya Sangshad (Parliament) on 18th June. He underscored the need for co-operation between India and Bangladesh. He said that only through co-operation the two neighbours can face up to external pressures and changes in the world. A joint communiqué issued on 19 June at the end of President Giri's visit, high-lighted the bonds of friendship between the two countries.<sup>13</sup> From time to time India and Bangladesh governments held bilateral discussions in order to sort out the differences that emerged on various issues of international situation and on problems of mutual interests.

### **Summit Conference 1974**

The summit conference of India and Bangladesh started on 12<sup>th</sup> May 1974, in order to thrash out various questions which would help to strengthen "very friendly relations" existing between the two countries. The Bangladesh observers described the summit meeting as a milestone on the road to the sub-continent peace realized on the basis of sovereign interests.

The summit conference covered almost all the aspects of Indo-Bangladesh relations. On the very first day Mrs. Indira Gandhi and Sheik Mujibur Rehman met and their talks covered the sharing of Ganga waters, trade between the two countries and sub-continental affairs. The agreements concluded had reflected that the conference was a great success. The most important agreement was of course the border agreement.

The coup in Bangladesh on 15 August, 1975, ended a golden period of Indo-Bangladesh relations. In the coup, Sheik Mujibur Rehman was killed, his government was over thrown and a new regime under his cabinet colleague Khondakar Mushtaque Ahmed was established in Bangladesh.

First of all it is important to identify and analyses the meaning and scope of 'peace' and 'pragmatism'. The idea of peace has multiple meanings; peace means not to hurt, not to harm, not to lesion or bruise. On the other hand, pragmatism means a domain of application or use. Pragmatism actually denotes to the use or application of any ideas and actions. Now, as far as foreign policy is concern, the author is trying to make a linkage between peace and pragmatism largely in post-Nehru



(mainly Indira Gandhi era) Indian foreign policy. Here, peace is basically a dominant ideology of principle. It is noteworthy to say that, Indira Gandhi was efficiently carrying Nehruvian idea of world peace and stability and due to that reason she has nurtured the Ministry of External Affairs as well as its officials. She has also tried to use peace pragmatically by making Indo-Soviet treaty of friendship; through this treaty she has managed to challenge Pakistan and on the other hand she has made India globally relevant.

So, treaty of friendship has acted as an initiative of peace and cooperation. Another significant example of peace and pragmatism is- the liberation movement in Bangladesh and the cooperation of India. Although, many scholars have argued that, Nehru would have preferred a diplomatic solution in Bangladesh rather than the use of military forces (Bandyopadhyaya, 1970). However, Indira Gandhi not only prevented the repressive and non-democratic forces in Bangladesh (then it was East Pakistan) successfully, but she was also successful to save the entire South East Asian region from 'violence and unfreedom'. The liberation of Bangladesh was the best example of the use of peace in a pragmatic manner. Hence, although Indira Gandhi has been criticised vastly for the misuse of 'power' but it can't be denied that she was a pioneer of peace and will be remembered for her pragmatic attitude.

The items of the first category are generally orchestrated whenever a political group interested in discrediting the ruling establishment in Bangladesh used it for domestic purpose. In the case of the second category the providing of sanctuary to insurgents from North-East India has gone down considerably in recent years. Farakka, however, is a complex issue, made worse by neglecting to treat it for years at the political level.

Relations with Bangladesh improved rapidly during Janata period. The Janata regime recognised the legitimacy of the post-Mujib regime in Decca, signed with it a five year agreement on the waters of Ganga, and assured it that Pro-Mujib elements would not be allowed to carry on their activities against the Bangla regime from the Indian bases.

Indo-Bangladesh amity is essential for the maintenance of peace and stability in the sub-continent and the world. Historical, ideological and personality factors are obstructing the development of cordial relations between these countries. Co-operation in economic and cultural spheres helped the emergence of harmonious relations between these countries. It is difficult to assess the role of India in the crisis in the sub-continent. The merits of the role of India in the Bangladesh independence movement can be determined only in the long run, whether it has contributed to peace and stability in the region or otherwise.

A number of factors are active in the determination of the interaction between India and Bangladesh. India had always been friendly towards Bangladesh and made a number of gestures concerning the Farakka issue in the hope of strengthening the bonds of friendship. The anti-Indian and pro-Pakistan lobby which got encouragement from the ruling elite after the murder of Sheikh Mujibur Rehman, left no stone unturned in instigating the people of Bangladesh against the Indian government. Their propaganda had made the people of Bangladesh of suspicious nature concerning their country's interaction with India. During Sheikh Mujib's regime both the Governments signed a number of agreements and treaties. The Indo-Bangladesh Treaty, The Indo-Bangladesh boundary Agreement and Interim Agreement on the Farakka Barrage are a few among them.



It 'recognized the legitimacy of the post-Mujib regime in Dacca, signed with it a five year agreement on the use of Ganga waters, and assured it that pro-Mujib elements would not be allowed to carry on their activities against Bangladesh from the Indian bases. After the re-emergence of Mrs. Indira Gandhi in 1980, the Congress government continued good neighborly relations with its immediate neighboring countries.

At present, the ruling dispensation under Awami League is favorably disposed towards India and is trying to have cordial relations with it, however, the opposition led by the BNP leader Khalida zia is opposing cordial relations with India staunchly. The reason must dawn both on both the countries that having healthy relations between the two countries is in their best interests as well as in the interests of the region.

### References

1. Kothari, Raj Kumar. (December 2015). Civil Society in the Third World: Reality or Hoax ? International Journal of Research on Social and Natural Sciences, 4(2), 1-1
2. Subrahmanyam, K. (1975). Foreign Policy Planning in India. New Delhi: Foreign Affairs Reports. Vasudev, Uma. (1977). Two Faces of Indira Gandhi
3. For the Text of Declaration see Foreign Affairs Record, (Ministry of External Affairs, Delhi, Vol. XIX, No. 4, April 1983, pp. 148-9).
4. The Statesman, (Calcutta) 6 December, 1972. See det
5. Foreign Affairs Record. (Ministry of External Affairs, Delhi, Vol. XX, No. 6, June 1974, pp. 105-7).
6. Bangladesh Observes, (ed.): "Fruits of co-operation" 18 May 1974. Also see Indian Express (ed.) "Fruitful visit" 18 May 1974, Milestone towards sub-continental Amity (ed.), Mainstream, Vol. XII, No. 39-9, 25 May 1974, pp. 45-
7. indian ministry of external affairs report new delhi,1977-78,p.5