

A strong and healthy Indo-Bangladesh Bilateral relation which creates economic and socio-political impact over the Borders

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Abstract: A healthy bilateral relation between India and Bangladesh is vital for economic development of both the nations. India and Bangladesh have a common interest in music, literature and arts along with that they have a similarity in their heritage, semantic and culture. India and Bangladesh all through the years have experienced a hot and cold relationship starting from the sharing of Ganga water Treaty to being the biggest trade partners in South Asia, India and Bangladesh share 54 rivers in common. Their economic ties have increased with the connectivity of different ports and railways and road ways. However there are lot of outstanding issues which both the country have to together resolve in the sector of border issues , water sharing , disaster management, eradication of drug trafficking , terrorism , problems of construction and repair of border pillars along with working towards blue economy to amplify trade and commerce between the two countries . 2021 marks 50 years of diplomatic relation of Indo-Bangladesh which has overcome many water wars , maritime issues , illegal migrants into India followed by border clashes to Land Agreement Treaty and overcome the future threats like China interference in the domestic politics of Bangladesh and initiate a proactive policy towards Bangladesh

Keywords: Indo-Bangladesh, healthy bilateral relation, illegal migrants, water sharing, trade and commerce, economic cooperation.

Introduction

On 3rd December, India decided to help Bangladesh in its liberation war against Pakistan to protect Bangladesh language and its culture .On 16 December, 1971 Bangladesh won the war against Pakistan with the help of India, winning of the Liberation war of 1971 led the foundation of an Independent Bangladesh and the beginning of India and Bangladesh relations. India first acknowledged this diplomatic relation in the year 1971. Since 1971 to till now India and Bangladesh has shared much friendly relations and had cooperation in many fields. India shares its longest and largest boundary with Bangladesh which stretches to 4100 km, Bangladesh share its borders with India states of West Bengal, Assam, Meghalaya and Tripura. Bangladesh is strategically and geo-politically very significant for India, along with culturally and economically and for the maintenance of healthy bi-lateral relation. Bangladesh is one of emerging trade partner in South Asian countries for India, India plays a very prominent role in SSARC and hold an eminent position for its work, and also because of its size, and India contributes the most for the development of the regional cooperation from providing resources to technology sharing or military support. If we look back at the history of semantic, heritage and culture we see India and Bangladesh have a lot in common along with their interest for music, literature and art. India and Bangladesh share 54 rivers in common along with Bangladesh imports 1160MW power from India and Bangladesh is the biggest trade partner for India. Bangladesh is home to 700 rivers and is one of the major countries which is prone to floods, along with it, it is the second largest exporter of clothes in the world. Bangladesh Garment industry from the past 25 years has been serving as the major source of women exchange, and 60% of the garment production takes place here. The main occupation of Bangladesh is agriculture where 90% of the people are farmers even in India the main source of income for more n half of the population is agriculture. India is an agricultural country , Bangladesh is also the biggest exporter of fish in Asia , along with that India and Bangladesh when it comes to language , where the Bangladeshi and the Eastern State of West Bengal are Bengali speaking people .Bangladesh DNA based agriculture development the first of its kind has achieved a great success . Today Bangladesh is emerging and developing economically. India and Bangladesh also have main differences but those are not fundamental in nature. India and Bangladesh relation so far has been a tale of missed opportunities even though there have been streaks of hopes and marking of hot and cold relationship. 2021 marks 50 years of diplomatic relation of Indo-Bangladesh which has overcome many water wars , maritime issues , illegal migrants into India followed by border clashes to Land Agreement Treaty .

Research Methodology

For the purpose of this exploration, I have used a amalgamation of two of the archetypical social sciences research tools application –as they are authentic and brilliant method to assemble statistics from multiple appellants in an methodical and convenient way. Question were asked to the parents and their children, survey, interviews –consisting of several interrogation which were dispersed among representative of each contender group.

Objective of the Research Paper

The main areas of exploration in this paper incorporates

1. An in depth studies on Indo-Bangladesh relation
2. Why Bangladesh is important to India economically, culturally and geo-politically
3. What are the major issues in the maintenance of health bilateral relation between India and Bangladesh?

4. What measures have been taken by the two countries to maintain healthy relation and increase trade relation between them?

Contemporary relation

Indo-Bangla treaty of friendship and cooperation signed in the immediate aftermath of the Liberation war of 1971 never reached its fullest potential owing to the various negative developments including political development in Bangladesh, from time to time. There has been many issues which has plagued their relationship from time to time like the Tin Bigha Corridor , New Moore island , Ganga water sharing ,Indo-Bangladesh enclave exchange Tripaimukh Dam on Barak River in Manipur , the recent issues like CAA and China and Pakistan interference in the domestic politics of Bangladesh , water dispute issues.



However the Ganga water sharing dispute was resolved with the treaty of 1996 and the Farakka baarage have been resolved more or less to mutual satisfaction. India has from time to time raised its concern over all the alleged free run provided in Bangladesh to the Indian insurgents and terrorist strikes who have used this Bangla hospitality as a weapon to launch incursions and terrorist strikes against India where Bangladesh has always denied any such engagement in aiding and abetting them . Rather it has been often believed and seen Indian role in the disturbance in its Chittagong region something India has always denied. In Fact India has been host to thousands of refugees from Chittagong for a long period of time before they were refugee following an friendly settlement of the issue many have till stayed fearing loss of life and property in India.

After the Indo-Bangladesh Land Boundary Agreement of 1974 which came into force on the 1st of August 2015 for the formal exchange of 162 enclaves between them. It was only advisable to further consolidate upon the historical ties by building surge functional cooperation in other issue areas mutual interest. The exchange of enclave is one of border issue that has been resolved , undemarcated border in many sectors along their borders is another issue requiring attention , the survey, construction and repair of missing border pillars including exchange of cadastral survey records between their bordering districts are some of the tasks which needs to be taken up with dispatch . Some of the Bangladesh Dinajpur district are in Indian South Dinajpur and vice versa. The maritime connectivity between the two countries has been an issue with traders having to cooperate through ports of Colombo and Singapore. Large vessels from two countries have far strike trade through Singapore and Colombo because of marginal profit accrual s, Being fairly long routes , the transportation charges and the cost of goods have only increased over the years , the economic ties between the two suffered all these years owing to adverse economic of scale . The movement of cargo across the extant maritime expanse straddling India and Bangladesh was impeded due to unviable sea route. However , now there has been a direct connection formed between the Eastern ports of India with Bangladesh ports including Chittagong, the Maitri Setu Bridge between India and Bangladesh which has made Tripura the economic gateway of North East , a 1.9 km bridge over the river Feni south Tripura which would increase the Indo-Bangladesh economic ties , this new bridge will connect Chittagong port which is just 100 km from Agartala will connect with the Haldia port and Varanasi Port through water ways . Along with Dhaka-Sealdah Train services and Dhaka-Kolkata-Agartala bus services which is already going on , Indo-Bangladesh relation will take a better turning point with Sheikh Hasian government of Bangladesh intent on improving the bilateral relations with India , with the interim government's

cracking down on corruption and fundamentalism and vowing to attend to India's security concerns, one can hope for better relation between the two.

A cognate subject warranting attention is the border management of common rivers including Teesta, India and Bangladesh share 54 common rivers out of which the Teesta river which originates in the Himalayas and flows through West Bengal and Sikkim and joins in Assam in the Brahmaputra river and Jamuna which is in Bangladesh is the most controversial issue between the two countries, it covers the entire floodplains of Sikkim which further enters Bangladesh 2800 sq Km, it is main source of living for hundred and thousand of people, Teesta is very much important for West Bengal, which serves as the lifeline for many districts in North Bengal.

Bangladesh and India have though sought out their differences over the Ganga water sharing treaty of 1996, however the Teesta river still remains a major issue of concern. They has been a joint river commission existing since 1972, to make sure that the water is utilise in a proper way where no country has to suffer, in a dispute free and Hazard free environment. With Prime Minister Narendra Modi visit to Dhaka we have reached decided to make free and equitable decisions on water sharing agreement on previous issues.



Drug trafficking in the border areas have emerged as a major concern as this finance many terror groups across the world. Such Nacro terrorism not only targets our youths but also weakens the societal binding by spreading disaffection, India has greatly succeeded in eradicating the danger of poppy cultivation which acts as a major source of drug money but poppy cultivation in Bangladesh remains a worry. The menace pace at which the terrorism groups including ISIS, Al Qaida and Taliban have been spreading their tentacles it won't take much time to reach the shores of India and Bangladesh border.

Regular movement of militants across their international border and extradition policy for the exchange of prisoners languishing in each other's jail suit the security interest of both. A list of prisoners were exchanged at a high level meeting between the two countries where the Bangladeshi authorities handed over a list of Indian in Bangladesh jails and received a list of Bangladeshi national in Indian correctional times. The two countries need to coordinate their acts to forge a common strategy including coordinated sharing of intelligence to deal with these problems.

The protection of Sunderbans, as a natural heritage shared by India and Bangladesh, Sunderbans has been awaiting a coordinated endeavour to avoid ecological disaster in the offing. The rising sea level precipitated by global warming has been gobbling large chunks of lush and green mangroves of Sunderbans. Expert fears that a day will come soon when both India and Bangladesh will have to redraw their maps as they will lose their land to the sea, Consequently the world will lose one of the largest biosphere reserve operating as a air purifier. Apart from this looming territorial loss thousands of people will loose their lives and the Royal Tiger will become extinct. The littoral cities like Kolkata and Khulna are likely to be ravaged by frequent natural disaster which incorporates cyclone, unseasonal rain and prolonged dry spells if these mangroves continue to vanish. A incident of this was experienced in 2009 in West Bengal and Bangladesh by Cyclone Alia which caused large scale devastating. After this incident both India and Bangladesh have started coordinating their efforts to save Sunderbans, both the countries had submitted their proposal at the Climate Change Summit in Paris recently for tackling the impending crisis. The development has been welcomed by the people, however efforts to protect the mangroves must begin with the local people, an holistic approach which addresses the ecological imperatives of the region while simultaneously cushioning the inhabitants has to be visualised.

Regular illegal immigration from Bangladesh into India is becoming a major concern for India. Today it is estimated that there are around 10 million illegal immigrants living in India, about which the Indian security agencies have been rightly concerned about as there has also been instance of ISI agents finding ways into Indian Territory through Bangladesh. With Bangladesh becoming a safe place for such illegal activities such as drug trafficking, human trafficking and proliferation of small weapons, the sustained negative activism by the force of religious fundamentalism in Bangladesh has posed further threats to India's security and integrity. But despite all these security threats to India emanating from its soil, Bangladesh still does not appreciate the imperatives and advisability of border fencing by India and has vehemently opposed the same arguing that this may further sour bilateral relations.

The Economic cooperation while India is a bigger partner has always been more magnanimous in its concession to Bangladesh, where as Bangladesh is still quite inhibited in getting into a full fledged economic cooperation, not realising the fact that economic can cooperation can bring immense profit for both the countries. Despite the trade deficit for Bangladesh running into six million dollars, there can immense benefits to be reaped from full-grown economic cooperation between the two.

Bangladesh earns huge benefits as a result of allowing transit facility through its territory to South East Asian countries for India as in return earn huge rewards in terms of customs duty and other relevant tariffs. Indian Industrial MNC the TATA group has been working on its investment plans worth three billion dollars for Bangladesh in its gas resources, something which has been touted as the largest so far in Bangladesh, many more investment opportunities, with both the countries reducing bilateral customs duties and reducing their negative list significantly both can earn immense financial rewards in terms of customs duties as much of the illegal and underground trade would come over ground. India has Bangladesh as its biggest trade partner. For the year 2018-19 the export from India stood to US 9.21 billion USD to Bangladesh and the import from Bangladesh for the same year was US 1.22 Billion USD. Bangladesh had also thanked India for duty-free and Quota free access given by India to Bangladeshi exports since 2011 under the South Asia Free Trade Area (SAFTA), both the countries together have inaugurated the Haldibari(India) and Chilahati(Bangladesh) railway line, they have even signed the Inland Water Transit and Trade second protocol. India thanked Bangladesh for supporting in its election to the United Nation Security Council. India and Bangladesh has recently signed seven agreements and established three projects to strengthen their relationship.



There are many other issues that the country has to resolve like poppy cultivation in border areas, cattle smuggling, construction and improvement of land customs stations and land port, movement of militants along the border, sharing intelligence to curb terrorism, women trafficking, illegal arms smuggling, exchange of prisoners, languishing in each other jail, setting up immigration centres at the border survey, construction and repair of missing border pillars, exchange of cadastral survey records, export and import issue, border management of common river, promotion of tourism, disaster management, working together on blue economy and reducing border accidents to zero. Moreover Bangladesh is an active partner in the belt and Road initiative project

that Delhi has not yet signed . Bangladesh is also a major victim of Chinese military inventory including submarine which is a major concern for India .

It is believed that more than one crore Bangladeshis have entered India illegally over the years sometime which Bangladesh government refuse to accept . The Hasina government should not only open multi-level dialogue with India to resolve all the issues but ought to make honest efforts to stop illegal immigration into India . Since South Asia Free Trade Area still is a long way into future both countries would do well to advisability of having a bi-lateral Indo-Bangladesh in keeping with the common interest of both the countries . If both the countries are successful in resolving their issues while taking positive and proactive steps in taking bilateral relation to new levels , Indo-Bangladesh relation can actually set the pace for regional cooperation for rest of the South Asian countries .

Conclusion

There are a number of challenges which are yet to be resolved between the two countries for maintaining health relation.

Bangladesh struggle in keeping alive their language and cultural is highly respectful across the world. the struggle also marks the beginning of India Bangladesh diplomatic relation which has come a long with hot and cold relationship between the two countries .India's hegemonic role in SSARC and its helping hand to all the developing countries. India and Bangladesh trade and economic cooperation has reached new levels of development with the construction of the muriti setu bridge and connecting different ports along with starting water ways , railways , roadways direct connecting between the two countries . However issues like internal security, drug trafficking, cattle smuggling , border land issues and water management issues needs to be managed and resolved to continue with a healthy relation between the two countries .

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