

A close look at bangladesh

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The People's Republic of Bangladesh, also known as Bangladesh, is one of the youngest nations historically. Established in 1971, the country has undergone various battles to win its independence, including those to fight for its religion and its language. At present, Bangladesh is one of the unfamiliar states in Asia, continuously fighting overpopulation, poverty, and political unrest (Whyte & Lin, 2009). Bangladesh is geographically situated in South Asia, bordered by Myanmar in the southeast and India in the north, west, and northeast.

The most essential feature of the country is its “ web of rivers” that molded its culture and lifestyle positively in terms of transportation and hydroelectric power and negatively with massive flooding (Whyte & Lin, 2009). The total area of Bangladesh is roughly 144, 000 square kilometers, which is a bit smaller than Iowa. The estimate population of the country is 158 million, which makes it the seventh most populous in the world (CIA, n. d.) I. Government

The politics of Bangladesh has witnessed several changes with the shifting of the forms of government from parliamentary in 1972, to presidential in 1975, to martial law in 1981 and back to parliamentary in 1991 (Whyte & Lin, 2009). At present, the nation is ruled by the chief of state, President Zillur Rahman, and the head of government, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Wajed. Members of the cabinet are handpicked by the prime minister and appointed by the president. The legislative branch is led by the unicameral National Parliament elected by the people.

The Supreme Court is headed by chief justices and other judges appointed by the president (CIA, n. d.). Ahmed (2004) further describes politics in

Bangladesh as a constant chat topic in all parts of the country. He further likened Bangladeshi politicians to that of the country's rivers – changing their courses unpredictably, overflowing their banks and submerging new lands. Moreover, the capital of Bangladesh is Dhaka. It is further divided into seven administrative divisions, namely, Barisal, Chittagong, Dhaka, Khulna, Rajshahi, Rangpur, and Sylhet (CIA, n.

d.). The nation as a developing country is characterized by corruption brought about by indecisiveness of politicians, politicization of the civil service, and nepotism among civil servants. According to the World Bank, should Bangladesh lessen corrupt practices in its government, it is possible that it will enjoy an improved economic status (Ahmed, 2004). II. Economy One of the poorest nations in the world – this is what typically defines the economy of Bangladesh.

The nation relies primarily in agriculture, livestock, and forestry, with crop agriculture as the main contributor in the country's GDP (Ahmed, 2004). Nonetheless, one-third of its population still lives below the poverty line (CIA, n. d.). Because of this, Bangladesh relies heavily from foreign aid, which it uses to improve its agriculture and support efforts to advance society. One sector that is being developed to help Bangladeshi economy is energy, namely, gas, oil, and mineral explorations that currently attract foreign investors.

Another element that keeps its economy afloat is foreign trade (Ahmed, 2004). It exports garments, frozen fish and seafood, jute and jute products, and leather to the United States, Germany, and the United Kingdom, among others (CIA, n. d.). Moreover, export of labor also contributes highly to the

economy with most Bangladeshi working overseas such as in Saudi Arabia and Malaysia (Ahmed, 2004). Still, unemployment needs to be prioritized as unemployment rate is at an estimated 2.5 percent, which the nineteenth highest in the world. III. Religious Practices

Religion is a significant part of Bangladeshi society. In fact, religion is an important element of people's self-identity. More than three-fourths of the population are Sunni Muslims, ten percent are Hindus and the others are Christians and Theravada-Hinayana Buddhists. The Constitution upholds Islam as the state religion but allows each citizen to practice his faith according to his choice. Furthermore, the government has established imam training academies and proclaimed Islamic days of festivals. Moreover, each religion has its own set of laws.

For instance, Muslim men are allowed to marry up to four times but society discourages this practice; Christian men can marry just one woman; Hindus can practice unlimited polygamy; but marriages between members of different religions were unrestricted. In addition, important religious festivals and holy days of all religious groups are observed as national holidays (US Department of State, 2007) IV. Language The official language of Bangladesh is Bangla or Bengali, which is the native tongue of more than 98 percent of the population.

However, many also speak English and Urdu. Bangla's influences include Islam, Arabic, and English (Kwintessential, n. d.) V. Educational System Since a huge portion of the population experiences poverty, the educational system in Bangladesh is highly subsidized. Schooling is divided into primary, secondary, and higher secondary levels. Tertiary education is also provided in

universities and affiliated colleges. In all levels, students can opt to be educated under Bangla or English medium (Prime Minister's Office, n. d.). VI. Norms and Values

In Bangladesh, age generally tells how one is addressed. If people are of the same age, first names are used but if the person being addressed is older, he is called by his first name and a suffix that indicates the family relationship. Moreover, gift-giving is important for Bangladeshis. For instance, bringing of pastries or sweets is encouraged in visiting a home; offering of frangipanis, white flowers, alcohol, products with non-halal meat, and even money are discouraged; opening gifts in front of the giver is likewise discouraged; and gift-giving should be done with both hands.

Moreover in eating, directly turning down an invitation is impolite; many eat with their hands so asking of utensils is rude; meals will be shared by the same sex; guests are served first; and the oldest person at the table eats first; passing of food and drinks is done with the right hand only. Furthermore in communication, Bangladeshis tend to communicate indirectly so their body language needs to be understood as well. Nonetheless, they stand close when speaking to someone of the same gender (Kwintessential, n. d.). VII.

Conclusion

To conclude, Bangladesh has come a long way from its establishment 40 years ago. Nonetheless, it has a lot to learn in terms of political stability and economic development. Still, the nation has reasons to be proud of such as its religion, language, and values that has established its identity as a free nation. References Ahmed, S. (2004). Bangladesh: Past and Present. New Delhi: A. P. H. Publishing Corporation. CIA. (n. d.). South Asia: Bangladesh.

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