

SAVE BANGLADESH IN THE SPIRIT OF LIBERATION WAR

Bangladesh Minority Janata Party (BMJP)

Declaration

There is no scope of looking at the sacrifice of the minorities in any shorter form in the great War of Independence in 1971, through which, Bangladesh was liberated with the life-sacrifice of 3 million martyrs irrespective of race, religion and caste. However, despite almost half a century of independence has passed, almost all the minorities today are the victims of neglect and deprivation from participation in all spheres including governing the state. After the formation of Pakistan in 1947, 24-year unrestrained exploitation and deprivation, minorities have been forced to leave the country due to sectarian riots and hoaxing the power of transferring property by selling. The minorities dreamed with aspirations of new life at 6-point movement in 1966 and at 11-point movement in 1969. As such, 99 percent of the minority voters in the country gave the verdict to Awami League in the general elections of 1970. As a result, Awami League got absolute majority in that election. This historic verdict of minorities reached the final goal of the independence movement, which the Pakistani rulers did not look good. Thus, during the 'Operation Search Light' on March 25, 1971, they carried out mass killings in the minority-based areas throughout the country including Dhaka. More than 12 million minority people took shelter as refugees in India. On the way of taking shelter in refugee camps of India, 1.4 million people were killed, 90 percent of whom were Hindus. However, since recognition of equality, good governance and equal dignity were well placed in first constitution of the country that was composed & adopted in the light of proclamation of independence, the diseased & uninhabited people from the refugee camps came back home with a dream of new life to have the taste of freedom standing on the rubbles of devastation after the independence of the country. But their dream stumbles from the beginning because of the rise of new fanatic forces in the newly intendent country. Again minorities were targets here. Today, the minorities in this country are victims of oppression, persecution and deprivation in an independent-sovereign Bangladesh where the minorities have so much sacrifice and contribution to create and build thus country. In spite of being the charge of the country's leadership in hands of the party that led the war of liberation, the minority persecution in the whole country reckons new, which was not the expectation of an independent Bangladesh in any way. As a result, 'Bangladesh Minority Janata Party' has been formed with the aims, ideals and objectives of preserving the security, rights and interests of all minorities in Bangladesh. The word 'Minority' here is not meant to mean only the religious & ethnic minorities. We understand that those who are oppressed, depressed, exploited and denied rights are all 'Minorities'.

In these circumstances, being inspired with the philosophy of undivided humanity and in light of the spirit of liberation war, following 7 points are placed in front of the nation on behalf of Bangladesh Minority Janata Party (BMJP):

1. People's Representation and Empowerment

- a) 64 constitutional seats, one in each district, shall be reserved to elect Parliament Members from among the people belonging to religious, ethnic, indigenious and tribal minorities to ensure their proper representation in the Bangladesh National Parliament through joint electoral system (universal voting).
- b) Minimum 20% posts shall be ensured for the people belonging to religious, ethnic, indigenious and tribal minorities in all levels of appointments in government jobs, promotions & postings including ministerial, constitutional, administrative, foreign, police, defense forces posts, autonomous and semi-autonomous offices.
- c) 20% seats shall be reserved for the people belonging to religious, ethnic, indigenious and tribal minorities as the people's representatives in each level, including the lowest level of the local government administration.

2. Constitutional Protection

- a) Upon restoration of the original constitution of 1972 and with its necessary amendment, the constitutional protection of the people belonging to religious, ethnic, indigenous and tribal minorities shall be ensured.

3. Equal Rights and Equal Dignity

- a) A ministry in the name of '**Minority Affairs Ministry**' shall be formed with immediate effect for the welfare and development of the people belonging to religious, ethnic, indigenous (including indigenous in the plain lands) and tribal minorities and a Cabinet Minister belonging to the said group of people shall be appointed in this ministry. The existing Trusts in the names of 'Hindu Religious Trust', 'Buddhist Religious Trust' and 'Christian Religious Trust' shall be converted into Foundations.
- b) A '**National Minority Commission**' shall be constituted in order to safeguard the human rights.
- c) Before starting the state and constitutional programs, arrangements shall be made to recite from the religious texts of existing four main religions in Bangladesh.
- d) History, heritage, culture and religious establishments of all the religions and communities existing in Bangladesh shall be preserved nationally.
- e) Religious establishments shall be built and maintained at the levels of District, Upazila and Union under the public funding for the existing four major religions in Bangladesh.
- f) Imams, Hindu Priests, Buddhist Monks and Christian Pastors shall be appointed under government salaries to the related religious establishments of the main four religions existing in Bangladesh as applicable.

4. Enactment and Implementation of Interest-based Laws

- a) To constitute a '**Speedy Trial Tribunal**' to prevent persecutions on the people belonging to religious, ethnic, indigenous (including indigenous in the plain lands) and tribal minorities, and to make it effective.
- b) Necessary laws & acts shall be enacted and implemented to eliminate all kinds of apartheid & cast-based discriminations.
- c) '**Religious Endowment Property Law**' shall be enacted and implemented, and recommendations shall be made by the committee of Hindu religious experts shall be preferred in it.
- d) Special legislation shall be enacted to resolve all types of social discrimination in the welfare including profession & lands rights of the backward population, namely, Harijan, Dalit, Rishi communities and neglected Tea-workers. Upon implementation the CHT Peace Accord will have to be executed immediately.
- e) According to the CS Records of 1927, all property of Hindu religious people shall be handed over to their actual inheritance under the existing 'Hindu Inheritance Law' in Bangladesh.
- f) A Commission shall be constituted for the purpose of determining the reasons for decreasing religious, ethnic, indigenous and tribal minority population in the country from the time of 1947 till now. The Commission shall outline effective recommendations to prevent the decrease of said population.

5. Eliminating Discrimination in Education System

- a) Arrangement of preparing textbooks eliminating discrimination at all stages of national education program shall be ensured with uniformity in the light of non-communal spirit.
- b) Side-by-side of Islam in all educational institutions of the country, it shall be ensured the recruitment of religious teachers of Hindu, Buddhist and Christian religious communities. Salary discrimination in all stages of religion Teachers shall be eliminated. Religious institutions for religious minorities shall be established with initiative, funding and directives of the state. The existing religious educational institutions of the religious minorities shall be modernized and will be made suitable for the era.

6. Ensuring Punishment of Persecutors on Religious-ethnic Minorities

- a) The impunity culture for the persecutors upon conducting attacks on the people belonging to religious, ethnic, indigenous and tribal minorities shall be ended and '**Minority Protection Law**' shall be enacted to ensure safety & security of the said minorities.
- b) Upon ensuring responsibilities of the local people's representatives (elected or politically/socially recognized), administrative officers and law enforcement personnel, and in the event of their negligence in carrying out responsibilities, or their involvement to indulge in torture or persecution on the minority population, directly or indirectly, a punishment clause in the 'Minority Protection Law' shall be included.

7. Creating Non-communal, Non-racial, Free from Bigotry and Anti-terrorism Bangladesh in the Spirit of Liberation War

- a) The state shall have to take responsibility for preventing any kind of communalism, bigotry, apartheid and terrorist activities and ensure the formation of the country in the spirit of Liberation War. The state must ensure basic rights- food, clothes, education, medical and housing for the people of all communities.
- b) Intellectuality & knowledge-based political culture with participation of all communities irrespective of caste & creed will be introduced.
- c) The tendency of leaving the country of religious minorities to be completely prevented.
- d) Bangladesh shall be built with the ideology of '**Religion is One's Own, State is for All**'.

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