

## **A Masterpiece by a Poet of Politics**

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A good number of addresses delivered by the veteran world leaders are now included in the academic courses at various levels. However, the address by Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman before over 1million people at the Racecourse Maidan (now Suhrawardy Udyan) on 7 March, 1971 is a unique one in many considerations. The Speech of the thunderous voice of Bangabandhu inspiring millions of Bangalees to lay down their lives for liberating the motherland has a special position to the learners specially to those with literature background. Another important dimension of this historic speech is the effective application of all the skills of communication of public address making it a textbook example for the communicators specially for the teachers. Universally all the leaders are good teachers or communicators. This uniqueness has been more pronounced in case of Bangabandhu. When any teacher listens to Bangabandhu's 7 March Speech, he or she would surely get some ingredients to absorb at least in terms of communication proficiency.

No legend speech like that of Bangabandhu has been able to stir the world to that extent. If anyone click online, a huge stockpile of literature on the speech would be visible within second. Journals, compilations, articles, features, research findings, press reports, seminars, symposiums etc. on threadbare analysis of the historic speech are coming out every day. The American news magazine the 'Newsweek' in its 5 April, 1971 issue published a special article on Bangabandhu's 7 March Speech in which the Great Leader was described as a 'Poet of Politics'.

As a student of literature, I think, a political leader is a some sort of poet, who leads the followers to a world of dream. Bangabandhu had also been such a poet who was able to hypnotize his people with a dream of having an independent country breaking shackles of subjugation of thousands of years. However, a poet may or may not think of realizing his or her dream. From a poetic position, the speciality of Bangabandhu is, he had been able to materialize what he dreamt and what he made his people dream. So many leaders in this land dreamt of independence and carried out long struggle accordingly but failed in the long run. But Bangabandhu was unique in achieving thousands years old long cherished goal. And that is why, Bangabandhu is the greatest Bangalee of the all times, the founder of the Bangalee nation based state, the architect of the Independent Bangladesh and the father of the Nation of Bangladesh. Bangladesh and Bangabandhu are inseparable. As long as Bangladesh remains, the name of Bangabandhu will also remain. The conspiracy to undermine Bangabandhu in the chonicles of Bangladesh has never been successful, rather the conspirators themselves were thrown in the garbage of the history.



Photo : Bangabandhu delivering the historic 7 March Speech at the then Racecourse Maidan

The 7 March Speech, the ground breaking event towards achieving the most coveted freedom, has tagged Bangabandhu as the Poet of Politics. Bangabandhu delivered a huge number of speeches throughout his political life. He was an extra-ordinary orator. Each and every speech delivered by him was a poem. The best masterpiece was the 7 March Speech. His political acumen, charismatic leadership, undisputed command, sagacious thinking, profound wisdom, tower personality, invincible courage, indomitable spirit, sky high confidence --- everything was in climax while he was delivering the speech. The freedom fighters during the War of Liberation used to listen to this speech to boost up their moral strength. Even after half a century, whenever we listen to this iconic speech, we feel a stirring in our blood. The wording of this speech is tied in a miracle way that, not a single unit can be changed. No one would be able to put pen on it changing even a word. Whenever we read it, we find it as an extra-ordinarily inspiring poem, not prose.

Along with an exceptional skill of making a prompt public address, Bangabandhu was also blessed with an enormous potentiality of writing. We see his journalistic zeal in the then Daily Ittehad and other newspapers and periodicals. We also witness Bangabandhu's distinctive creative writing spirit in his autobiography "Oshomapto Attojiboni" (Unfinished Memoirs), "Karagarer Rojnamcha" (Prison Daily Life Diary) (daily life diary written Bangabandhu during his about 13 years imprisoned life) and "Amar Dekha Naya Chin" (The New China as I Saw), "Pakistani intelligence report on Father of the Nation" and "Smritikatha" (memoirs) (compilation yet to complete).

As a part of the under-graduate and graduate course syllabuses under the Department of English, the students have to go through detailed analysis of the 7 March Speech of Bangabandhu. The students are also to study some other world renowned speeches. These include 'The Gettysburg Address' by U. S. President Abraham Lincoln, 'I have a Dream' by American Civil Rights Activist Martin Luther King Jr. and 'A Long Walk To Freedom' (

autobiography and addresses) by South African Anti-apartheid Leader Nelson Mandela. Some other epoch-making addresses come as references. Addresses by British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, Soviet Leader Vladimir Lenin, Founding Father of the People's Republic of China Mao Tse-tung, Vietnamese Leader Ho Chi Minh, India's Non-violent Resistance Movement Leader Mahatma Gandhi and the First Indian Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru are notable.

Among all the world renowned addresses, the 7 March Speech of Bangabandhu is the most acclaimed one. This is the best speech of all the times. The speciality of this speech is; Bangabandhu delivered it fully extempore without having any script or talking points or even hints. The script of the speech now available was prepared from its audio-tape. Moreover, Bangabandhu delivered the speech in a life and death critical moment and none of the world leaders mentioned above delivered speech in such a nerve-breaking pressure. Abraham Lincoln's highest rated the Gettysburg Address was a three minute long with less than 275 words. The well scripted speech was delivered at a ceremony recalling the soldiers killed in the 'Battle of Gettysburg'. And British Prime Minister Winston Churchill delivered his outstanding speech "Never was so much owed by so many to so few" commemorating the pilots of the Royal Air Force killed in the 'Battle of Britain'.

Bangabandhu was under extreme pressure from the then ongoing movement activists to declare independence without any delay. There was also a reasonable ground for such declaration after dilemma of the Pakistani Junta to hand over power to the people's representative following the election results. On the other hand, the Pakistani Junta was out to quell such one sided declaration branding it as a separatist movement. Bangabandhu as a leader of the majority people of Pakistan had never been ready to take the blame. International support and sympathy needed for the Independence Struggle was also in his consideration. So, he had to be very thoughtful and strategic in selecting his words in the speech. How strategic he was! In the address, calling upon the countrymen to get ready to face the enemy in the imminent war with whatever the weapon they had, Bangabandhu finally proclaimed, "The struggle this time is a struggle for freedom--the struggle this time is a struggle for emancipation." He, in the speech, detailed various necessary preparation and gave all out directives for the war. However, about in the middle of the address, Bangabandhu gave four conditions like withdrawal of Martial Law, sending back army personnel to barracks, investigation into the killing of the Bangalees and transferring power to the representatives of the people – for thinking of to join the Assembly Session called on 25 March. Declaring strongest combat against the Pakistani Army, Bangabandhu commanded, "We will strive them (Pakistani soldiers) into submission. We will submerge them in water" Just immediately Bangabandhu pointing to the Pakistani soldiers in a soft voice said, "You are my brothers, stay in your barracks and no harm will come to you." In the address, Bangabandhu declared the continuation of the ongoing general strike in the government and semi-government offices and courts, but exempted rickshaws, launches, etc considering the suffering of the poor people. Thus we get both the soft hearted and hardliner Bangabandhu in his legendary address. The conversation style although the address made it more attractive. The total history of exploitation and repression on the Bangalees by the Pakistani rulers came in his brief but profound and deep speech. Bangabandhu, through his thunderous voice kept the huge audience surging like waves of the most rough ocean. His unwavering call touched the heart of every Bangalee and mobilized the whole nation to get prepared for the ultimate sacrifice.

Bangabandhu's 7 March Speech is also a matter of interest from the language communication point of view. From our language learning knowledge, we know, a person can deliver highest 3 words in a second for an understandable communication. This should be one third for a huge crowd using hundreds of loud speakers or microphone as had been on the Racecourse Ground on that day. The total number of words in the about 19 minute long age winning speech was 1107. The seasoned orator Bangabandhu maintaining that standard communication rule pronounced on an average 58 to 60 words in every minute. There was no repetition of word or redundancy in the speech. However, repetition of some words in one or two spots were just to give emphasis or reinforce the inner meaning. The inborn and inbuilt leader Bangabandhu, through his robust voice, articulation, body language, gesture and posture was so communicative that every individual of the huge gathering had been able to follow what he meant. While delivering speech, the way he was moving towards every direction to draw attention of audience of all sections of the gathering was also unique. The use of local dialect in the speech made it more effective. Bangabandhu developed this unparalleled oratory skill over the years. He delivered most of his speeches instantly, without any prior preparation. He was gifted with an extra-ordinary intellect of drafting speech just seeing the audience from dais. His memory was so sharp that he could recall any one he had talked to anywhere, any time even long before. He had always been with an extra-ordinary talent to read the mind of the people. And that is why, he was the leader of the mass people of the whole country.

The 7 March Speech of Bangabandhu was inscribed as a documentary heritage in the Memory of the World International Register of UNESCO on 30 October, 2017. Earlier, the members of the International Advisory Committee of the UNESCO during its meeting from 24 to 27 October, 2017 in Paris thoroughly reviewed the 7 March Speech that had created a nation state. They had greatly been amazed seeing how a very tall statured leader through his fiery words kept a human sea of a mammoth rally up roaring with slogans all the time. UNESCO in its declaration said, the message imbued in the speech is still relevant and inspiring today as it calls for more inclusive and democratic societies in which the political, economic and cultural aspirations of all groups are fulfilled.

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