

## **The Nobel Laureate's Politics: A Sceptical View**

Md. Anwarul Kabir

At last our Nobel Laureate Dr. Yunus has expressed his determination to float the Nagorik Shakti, his own party and urged his followers to initiate preliminary ground work for this venture. Like many others, I also have speculated that Dr. Yunus would have changed his mind and placed himself as a symbol of national unity, staying beyond partisan politics. Perhaps, his decision to join the active politics is quite unfortunate for the nation as it has missed a chance to enjoy an unanimous source of aspiration from our only Nobel Laureate.

Politics makes a man controversial, especially if h/she involves in the state machineries. Most probably realizing this reality many prudent and pragmatic leaders of the world did not join the government despite of having opportunity to do so. In this context, we may cite the name of Mohatma Gandhi of India and Ayatullah Khomeni of Iran. Both of them, if wanted could have directly led the government after fulfilling their respective objectives they had struggled for throughout their long political careers. However, their decisions not to be involved directly in the government boosted them up as symbols for national unity. So, in India, till today to the people of all walks of lives irrespective of political ideologies, religious creeds Mahatma Gandhi imply a common source of inspiration. The same is true in the case of Khomeni. Though after Khomeni's regime, the subsequent governments have somewhat deviated from the actual spirit of the Khomeni led Islamic revolution, still in Iran Khomeni is being widely treated as an icon of Islamic revolution. Among the contemporary leaders, there are instances of other categories of political leaders who after leading the government for a certain period have left the government voluntarily and again have turned into a common source of aspiration for their fellow people. In this context, the names of Nelson Mandala of South Africa. and Dr. Mahathir Mohammed of Malaysia are to be noted.

In Bangladesh the legendary leader Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman could be a symbol of unity like Mahatma Ghandhi or Ayatullah Khomeni if after liberation he kept away himself from the party politics. The name of Bangabandhu was one of the mantras to combat Pakistani occupying force and the people were united to fight even in the physical absence of Sheikh Mujib. However, after the liberation, the situation had completely been changed. Mujib's decision to lead the government made him controversial. Instead of becoming national asset Mujib became property of the Awami League. This is the irony of Sheikh Mujib's political career as well as the political history of Bangladesh. After the demise of Sheikh. Mujib, due to ill designed politics of General Zia, the nation has been divided into distinct two groups under the banners of Bengali and Bangladeshi nationalities. To get rid of this curse is a prime concern of all peace loving people. Perhaps Dr. Yunus by using his global image and his in-born charismatic personality would be able to show the nation the right direction for the in this context.

However, by involving in politics, no doubt, Dr. Yunus eventually will become a controversial personality. Already this phenomenon has been initiated. Eminent economists, academics already have started to unveil the real picture of the success story of the Grameen Bank which is the basis of the Nobel Prize that he has received. Empirical studies done by some economists

have raised the question whether the policy formulated by the global micro-credit icon at all has the capacity to alleviate the poverty level of the country.

The newly emerged party of Dr. Yunus is still at its infantile stage but yet there are some speculations centring his political agenda. In ideological discourse we have witnessed the bankruptcy of two major parties namely AL, and BNP. Prior to the postponed Election of the 22<sup>nd</sup> January, the secular AL's treaty with the fundamentalist group reflected its ideological corruption. On the other hand BNP-led government during its last tenure proved its anti-people performance through its patronising the fanatic Islamic extremist groups and endless corruption of the party leaders. Due to uttermost failure of the traditional political parties people are now at the state of frustration. But still Dr. Yunus has not succeeded to attract significant number of people under his umbrella. This is because people are now more conscious than ever. They are still observing his political steps closely. What will be his political philosophy is a main concern of the time. He has assured the nation that in near future his party would send the poverty to the museum. But in the name of poverty alleviation and woman empowerment why does his bank impose high interest rate for the credit provided to the womenfolk? He is advocating for privatisation of sea ports. Does, such privatisation will ensure the interest of the common people? Strategically, the importance of the Chittagong port knows no bound. For this, years ago US had shown interest in taking charge of that port. Can he be able to resist the foreign evil force aligning the peoples' interest? What is his plan to protect our under earth national resources from the greed of multinational companies? As an economist he is a strong supporter of the free market economy. Will the free market economy eradicate the poverty level of the country? Will it ensure to minimise the gap between poor and rich classes of the society? What will be Dr. Yunus's economic program? Like previous government, if his party comes to power, will it follow the prescriptions of the World Bank/IMF?

It is expected that Dr. Yunus addresses these questions transparently beforehand so that people can examine the mission and vision of his newly floated party. In fact, the people now want not only financially clean political party but they deserve a party which will look at the interests of the common people. Sitting at the ivory tower and propagating wishful thinking will not be able to attract the people.

Does our beloved Nobel Laureate Dr. Yunus realise the aspiration of the common people?

*Md. Anwarul Kabir is an educationist and freelance writer, working at CS Dept., AIUB*