

Root Cause Behind Necrophilia at Dhalpur

Design of the Centre and State Governments in the Interest of Palm Oil Empire

- **Harkumar Goswami**

“All Muslim girls should be raped even if brought out of graves” was a part of the fire spitting speech by an ultra-Hindutwabadi in the presence of the poster boy of Hindutwa, Ajay Kumar Bist, then Chief Minister of one of the largest states in India.

Remember Asifa? The 8 year old shepherd girl of Jammu Valley kept imprisoned in a temple and raped day after day. Even after death some satanic persons raped the corpse of Asifa to satisfy their beastly passion.

This deranged mindset is called necrophilia. The speech above was to propagate necrophilia among people. The same necrophiliac syndrome was witnessed through the nauseating scene during eviction drive at Sipajhar Dhalpur circle of Darrang district of Assam.

A 32 year old peasant youth was killed in police firing and a young man eager to prove himself as an Assamese by wearing a gamochha (Assamese hand-woven towel) as a mask was kicking the dead corpse of Mainul, a ‘Miyani’. A policeman was beating the dead with a rod. These scenes became viral throughout the world. All these happened in broad daylight in the presence of police officers, representatives of district administration and also in the presence of thousands of onlooking people.

Who was this youngman kicking the corpse? He was a photo journalist employed or embedded by the district administration, Bijan Bania. The police were instigating him in this act. This was not an example of madness by a single person, since a hysteric mass of people were observed to be relishing it. The question of old enmity between Mainul and Bijay does not arise at all. Most probably they had no chance to meet each other earlier.

Naturally such exhibition of hatred touches the minds and consciousness of all sane and sensitive persons bringing into mind a few questions.

Where does the root of such beastly frenzy lie? It is a grave question for any person without a proper knowledge of social life and politics of Assam. Assam is a land of many ethnic identities. Earlier the society and polity had been developing based on the conflict and unity of these ethnicities in a democratic and peaceful manner. But the ruling class of Assam found it detrimental to their interest. So they started utilising the conflicts to achieve their interests. This ruling class is locally hegemonistic and hankering for the blessings of Delhi to be in power. These flag bearers of “nationalism” are

chauvinist, communal and sectarian to the bones. Neck-deep in the frog-in-the-well xenophobic behaviour and vision diverting itself from the wide path of democratization has travelled an opposite path of chauvinism for the last forty years and reached this stage of necrophiliac derangement. Certainly key roles were played by so-called "Assamese National Organizations and the media in Assam. Bijay Bania is a fruit of that venomous tree.

For the last four decades, even from before, the politics of hatred carried on continually by the Assamese ruling classes and the intelligentsia living on them has given birth to such deranged mental makeup. In the name of nationalism they have sown the seeds of malicious antipathy towards Bengalis, Muslims, especially towards "miyan"s. They also look down upon the tribals and teagarden workers, but they follow a policy of compromise in the interest of their political power game. Let us see the events.

1. Massacres and pogroms at Gohpur-Nellie-Mukarmuwa-Chowlkhowa killing thousands in connivance with the state (in Nellie in full knowledge of the state administration the area was encircled and arson was carried out for two days leaving 4000 burnt to death, even official estimate goes up to more than 2500)
2. Putting D (DOUBTFUL) in the voter list against the names of lakhs and lakhs of citizens in a strange manner to disenfranchise them.
3. Striking out IMDT Act, 1983 at the instance of the previous BJP Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal.
4. One sided declaration of hundreds of citizens as 'foreigners' by the Foreigners Tribunal and sending them to detention camps.
5. Filing objections overnight against names of lakhs and lakhs of citizens during NRC.
6. Putting 19 lakhs of citizens out of citizenship register through complex bureaucratic manner where retired army personnel were also out of the register.
7. Latest being eviction drive at Dhalpur and the Bijay Bania episode. All the above incidents are set in a single string.

All these are parts of so called "nationalist" agenda and the Assamese media houses acted to champion it. From the beginning hatred towards Muslims was covertly present in Assam "nationalism". But it was veiled for tactical reasons. Then they used the name of Ajan Fakir along with Shankar Madhav to veil their actual face. It is no more needed. Ajan Fakir is past once they have surrendered to the aggressive Hindutva of the Cow Belt. The rise of the BJP ended the obligation of taking shelter to hypocritical secularism. It has now become a common affair to find from big leaders to smaller fries of "nationalism", from opportunists selling their secular values to chauvinism even to the so-called left intellectuals and 'popular artists' clad in saffron.

Himant Bishwasharma has turned to be today's "real hero". It started from the days of great Bordoloi by dividing Sylhet district a part of Assam during British rule and

communal violence throughout Lower Assam during 1950 that forced the Muslims to bow down to record themselves as Assamese speakers during the Linguistic Census. As a result it became easy to make Assamese as state language by means of short circuiting the ongoing natural and spontaneous process of developing nationalism through peaceful democratic means and importing a new trend of developing Assamese nationality by means of force and its attitude instead.

Himant Bishwasharma has become a new icon by developing a policy of presenting inverted reality of Assam. From the beginning it had been a tactic to make the people outside Assam believe the attacked or aggressed as attacker or aggressor, even after Nellie and Gohpur. Himant Bishwa-sharma has developed that policy into an art. By championing the interests of big capitalists of India he has succeeded in mobilising support of the Students Union and so-called nationalist organizations for the policy of eviction in the name of national interest.

Eviction drive was dressed up as development, blueprint of commu-nalisation of the drive was drawn, destruction process of human lives and livinghoods as well as environment in gigantic scale started, all in the interest of big capital 'Nationalism'. Politics of communal polarization and utilization of conflict among ethnicities is being used to compliment that interest. This reality is hard to be understood by people outside Assam; even the opposition could not understand it.

Behind assuring the electoral victory and putting of Himant Bishwa-sharma on the seat of Chief Minister both written and unwritten understanding was to implement the "policy of eviction driven development". Principal understanding of the policy is to evict peasants in large scale and hand over the land to the corporates. This is part of the Modi Government's path of restructuring agrarian areas which were assuring continuous GDP growth anew to serve the interest of big capital.

The Central Government's declaration to prioritise palm for edible oil and development of palm plantation was followed by pointing out North-East as suitable region for plantation of palm trees. According to some knowledgeable sources palm culture is harmful for environment. Maybe afraid of resistance in other states they selected North-East for that purpose.

In Assam most of the lands excepting the forest areas are vested to the government.

A huge section of toiling masses till those lands or dwell there. In the tribal areas most of the people do not have any land deed. Throughout the length and breadth of the state including the char (riverine Islands or lands coming out of the river) areas longstanding demand for land deeds (patta) is there for decades. The peasants are cultivating those lands year after year and produce valuable food grains and vegetables. In the char areas most of the poor peasants are Muslims of Bengali origin.

On other border areas of the state and by the side of forest reserves reside tribals, Nepalis and indigenous people in huge numbers.

The sword of eviction hangs over all these people. But state has very cleverly made the "miyan"s their first target. Anybody visiting the eviction site can clearly understand how cleverly the drive was planned targeting the miyans first using the propaganda machine of the so-called nationalist forces and media as well as that of the Sangh Parivar.

Most of the people of Dhalpur circle have settled there after losing their lands due to flood. Some had been displaced 3/4 times. Some are living here for decades. Through inhuman toil they have turned the virgin soil of the char of Brahmaputra into a green belt producing food grains and vegetables. One of the most popular vegetables in Guwahati is "Kuruar shak" (vegetables of Kurua). In the last few decades the peasant population of the villages of Dhalpur circle have built up school, market, Angawadi Centres etc.

But a few data will make people understand how the people are internally displaced and are branded as foreign settlers by the chauvinist organizations and media.

In the 1990s the area of Dhalpur was 77,420 bighas. Recently in reply to a question by Manoranjan Das the government informed the state assembly that it has become 25929 bigha 8 lecha. What happened to the other lands? To understand it an information will suffice. According to government record, two villages Kurua and NC Kirkara had lands 10,000 bigha and 41488 bigha 3 cotha 12 lecha respectively. Now both of them had gone into deep waters of Brahmaputra.

Experiences of these two villages are enough to understand the depth of the problem of internal displacement. There are many judgments of the higher courts, even UN Mandate to address the problem. But turning deaf ears to them eviction drive to forcibly displace them once more is being carried out even in this pandemic situation.

There are many instances how the internally displaced persons are forced to leave the areas where they started their lives afresh fighting against all odds. Doubting Thomases can go and find how nearly 500 families of NC Kirkara started life afresh in a part of Fuhuratoli and had already been served notice to clear out of the area.

No one is informed about the "humanist" approaches of the Himant Bishwasharma government and for that matter the Central government also. The people of Dhalpur have been asked to live on the dead bed of Brahmaputra 6/7 kilometers away. Leave alone arrangements of drinking water, drainage and proper livelihoods, the living arrangements are such that human beings have to share sheds

with cattle. Such “humanist” acts have turned free peasants into unemployed reserve labours in the interest of the big capital and its new venture in agricultural field.

There are camps of police and paramilitary forces at the eviction site. One can see one or two tractors moving here and there. Proposals to work as wage labourers have been put before the evicted people who will have to walk 6/7 kilometers to the workplace. The same people who used to supply food to the citizens of Guwahati and other places are being forced to become slave labourers for palm oil emperors like Adani. But history does not end here. Serious questions are being posed before the people of Assam. Will the Assamese people allow themselves to be used by the so-called ‘nationalists’ to sell Assam to the big capital just as Modi is selling India, or real democratic development of Assam will be the future? At present the conspirators are powerful but cause of democracy will finally defeat the conspiracies of big capital in Assam.

Nothing develops in straight lines. There will be many twists and turns. Let the corporates understand attempts of linear development often become counter-productive.