

**Name: Anik Aich**

**ID: 1821829042**

**Section: 38**

**Assignment Topic: Role of students in the emergence of Bangladesh.**

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**Introduction**

Student**s** are the backbone and the future of a nation. Student’s role in the emergence of the Bangladesh is significance. They are the builder of the nation. It starts from the language movement which was leaded by the students of Dhaka University in 1952. After the division, West Pakistan always trying to take the power and control over East Pakistan. Students and Bengali language activists and the progressive political forces remained vigilant against anti-Bengali political elite of the central government and pro-Urdu provincial government. Students plays a vital role in every movement and the liberation war against the West Pakistan.

**Student support to Muslim league in creation of Pakistan**

Dhaka University was not always a contentious place, nor were the students known to be particularly troublesome to the ruling regime. In fact, the University was established during the colonial period as a reward for Muslim elites in East Bengal who remained loyal to and supported the British during the attempted Bengal Partition of 1905–1911. While resistance to the administrative partition of Bengal had been fierce in Kolkata, in East Bengal the Muslim population saw the split as a potentially positive change that would increase economic and political representation for Muslims. When the political mobilization of West Bengal successfully pressured the British to annul the Partition, many Muslims in East Bengal felt betrayed. The British appeased the bitter East Bengalis by promising to build an educational institution to rival that of the great universities of Kolkata, and to base it in Dhaka. The university was actually not built until 1920, but even at this point of the height of nationalist agitation in West Bengal (and throughout much of the subcontinent), Dhaka, and the Muslim intelligentsia in particular, remained largely supportive of the British colonial regime and even, at times, agitated for the need to be more explicit in the Muslim League’s loyalty to the British. As the Nationalist movement gained steam across the subcontinent, and following the Lahore Resolution in 1940, in which the Muslim League argued for independent Muslim states, the faculty and students of Dhaka University shifted and in turn were highly supportive of the independent Pakistan project. The campus population became vocal supporters of the Muslim League and the leadership of Mohammad Jinnah as the “father of Pakistan.” At independence in 1947, the new nation of Pakistan was created into two wings (East and West Pakistan). Dhaka became the provincial capital of the Eastern wing and Dhaka University became the leading institution of higher education for East Pakistanis. Almost immediately after independence, however, the relationship between the two wings of East and West Pakistan deteriorated. Despite a larger proportion of the total population residing in the Eastern wing, power was heavily concentrated in the western wing, with most of the political posts were held by individuals from the western portion.

**Language movement**

The rights of the language took place immediately after the establishment of Pakistan. The movement was a brave struggle against the discriminatory role of the central ruling class of Pakistan against Bengalis. The students and youth were the main actors and artisan of all progressive movement. Therefore, the language movement was identified as the movement of the students. However, it is called the 'student movement'.

Bengali-speaking people of East Bengal made up about 56% of the total population (69 million according to one estimate) of the newly formed independent country of Pakistan. In 1947, a key resolution at a national education summit in Karachi proposed Urdu to be the only state language of Pakistan. This was followed by immediate wide spread opposition and protests especially in East Bengal. Students especially of the University of Dhaka in a meeting demanded Bengali to be a state language of Pakistan. Public outrage spread, and many students met on the University of Dhaka campus on 8 December 1947 to formally demand that Bengali be made an official language of the state. To promote their cause, the students organized protest rallies and processions in the streets of Dhaka. Mr. Dhirendranath Datta a member of the Pakistan Constituent Assembly proposed legislation in the Assembly to allow members to speak in Bengali and be allowed to be used for official purposes. The ruling party, the Muslim League, rejected the proposal terming it as an attempt to divide the people of Pakistan. In the height of civic movements, Mohammad Ali Jinnah, the Governor General of Pakistan arrived in East Bengal and declared that "Urdu, and only Urdu" shall be the only state language. He delivered a similar speech at the University of Dhaka on 24 March. However, Jinnah encountered protests by a large number of students present there as audience. The language movement continued unabated. On 31 January, the all-Party Central Language Action Committee was formed. The action committee called for an all-out protest on 21 February, 1952 including strikes and rallies. In an attempt to prevent the demonstration, the government imposed Section 144 in Dhaka, thereby banning any rallies and meetings. At nine o'clock in the morning, students began gathering at the University of Dhaka premises in defiance of Section 144. By a quarter past eleven, students gathered at the university gate and attempted to break the police cordon. A section of students ran into the Dhaka Medical College while others rallied towards the university premises cordoned by the police. However, the police arrested several students for violating section 144 as they attempted to leave. Enraged by the arrests, the students met around the Legislative Assembly and asked the legislators to present their demand at the assembly. It is alleged that at this point, police opened fire and killed a number of students, including Salam, Rafiq, Barkat and Jabbar. (hussain, 2018). After continued unrest and widespread protests, eventually on 7th May 1954, the constituent assembly resolved with the Muslim League's support to grant official status to Bengali. Bengali came to be recognized as the second official language of Pakistan on 29 February 1956. “Ekushe February” or “21st February” became the red letter day to the Bengalis all over the world. This also marked the beginning of disillusionment about the concept of Pakistan based on two nation theory. The language movement proved the fact that the religious belief cannot be the only basis of the establishment of an independent state. Identities of the different sections of the population based on language, culture and heritage are the ultimate factors that determine the fate or unity of a nation state. The language movement proved these facts beyond doubts and prompted the people of East Bengal (later East Pakistan) to establish their distinct and separate identity from rest of the (west) Pakistanis.

**Creation of all party student action committee**

All party student action committee was formed on 5 January 1969. It was formed through the joining of East Pakistan Student Union (Matia), East Pakistan Chhatra League, East Pakistan Student Union (Menon), and student leaders of Dhaka University Student Union. The Parishad created an Eleven Points Program that was based on the 1965 [Six Point program](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Six_Point_Program) of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and the Awami League. The Parishad was based in the University of Dhaka and it became the principal political entity of East Pakistan. (rahman, 2018)

**Student’s role in Mass uprising of 1969**

The mass uprising of 1969 played a vital role in preparing the nation for the Liberation War in 1971. This mass uprising took place only when the people of the country, especially the student community, rallied for the release of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was made the number one accused in the Agartala conspiracy case and the students took to the streets to vigorous protest against this fabled and fake case (Rahman, 2021). After the creation of the all student action committee they puts forth its 11 point agenda. In 8th january of 1969, political coalition Democratic action committee formed to restore democracy. The anti-Auyb uprising in East Pakistan began in January 1969 through a simultaneous movement of students, politicians and common people. Section 144 was enacted in Dhaka from January 20, 1969 and police opened fire as students marched on the Shaheed Minar in violation of section 144 and Asad was killed. A teenager student Matiur Rahman is gunned down by the police. During this time, students of Rajshahi University came out in the streets in violation of section 144 and started unprecedented protest. On 18 February, university proctor Dr. Shamsuzzoha was killed by the Pak army and the people of the whole country were blown away and the students took on more deadly roles at this time. At one point, Pakistan's dictator was forced to retreat and release Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. There have been many mass movements in Bangladesh but the mass movement of 1969 has been termed as the only mass uprising because the movement had a logical epilogue to restore democracy in Pakistan, establish autonomy and end of military rule The Six Points demand of Awami League had its wide reflection on the Eleven Points demand of the Chhatra Sangram Parishad. The demands relating to the interest of the Bangali middle class peasants and workers were also included in the Eleven Points demand. Consequently, the Eleven Points movement addressed wide public support in East Pakistan, and the leadership of the anti-Ayub movement virtually came within the grip of the student leaders. The student movement was initiated in October 1968, reached its climax in January 1969, and by mid January culminated into a mass movement. The Eleven Points movement of the students had direct contribution towards preparing the background of the War of Liberation. (Eleven points programme, 2014) It was a kind of revolution that started by the students and spread to the grassroots.

**Student’s role in Liberation war**

The contribution of teacher students of school colleges and universities is significance. Many heroic and meritorious students sacrificed their billable life in the liberation war. University students college student all students came forward and join the war. They formed mukti bahini organization who fought against the Pakistan army during the Bangladesh liberation war Dhaka university students was the center for development of independence of Bangladesh in 1971.

In march 1971 the Pakistani armed forces chief General Yahya khan and the politician Zulfikra Ali Bhutto launched operation searchlight to demolish the independence demand of East Bengalis. The student’s activities put up resistance outside the cantonment. Road blocks were aside to obstruct the march of the Pakistani column to the city areas. The wireless set fitted jeeps and trucks loaded with troops groaned on the streets of Dhaka city at midnight of 25 march. They encircled Dhaka university from east form south and from north as tanks, automatic rifles, rocket. Launchers, hearty mortar light machine gun and killed around 200 students which is called black night of Bangladesh. At the beginning of operation searchlight 10 teachers of Dhaka university were killed. Professor were killed at building 23 situated at Nilkhet. The non-tolerance movement was organized under the banner of “Independent Bangladesh students Movement council” from Jahrul Hoque hall of Dhaka university . The first target of operation searchlight was this student hall. By 25 March all leaders of Charta League had left the hall (wikepedia, 2021). Although in this situation all classes of people including students were Jumped into the liberation war and formed mukti bahini. It was dynamical formed, Subsequently by mid-April 1971, the Bengali officers and soldiers of east Bengal Regiments formed the “Bangladesh armed Forces” and M.A.G. osmani assumed its command in a meeting of the sector commanders in Kolkata, four important resolutions were taken in consideration of strategies aspects of the war, strategic aspects of the war, existing problems and future course of resistance. These were Guerrilla members would be sent to specific areas of Bangladesh with specific assignments. The regular forces would be organized into battalions and sectors. The Declaration of Independence was given by the father of the nation at the early hours of the 26th March, 1971 saying, "...from this day Bangladesh is independent". Even on 7th of March, he urged the Bengali population to prepare for liberation war.  The non-tolerance movement was organized under the banner of “Independent Bangladesh students Movement council” from Jahrul Hoque hall of Dhaka university . the first target of operation searchlight was this student hall. By 25 March all leaders of Charta. League had left the hall. Although in this situation all classes of people including students were Jumped into the liberation war and formed mukti bahini. It was dynamical formed, Subsequently by mid-April 1971, the Bengali officers and soldiers of east Bengal Regiments formed the “Bangladesh armed Forces” and M.A.G. osmani assumed its command in a meeting of the sector commanders in Kolkata, four important resolutions were taken in consideration of strategies aspects of the war, strategic aspects of the war, existing problems and future course of resistance. These were Guerrilla members would be sent to specific areas of Bangladesh with specific assignments. The regular forces would be organized into battalions and sectors. A large number of guerillas would be sent out inside Bangladesh to carry out raids and ambushes. The whole area of Bangladesh would be divided into sectors. The mukti Bahini take proper knowledge about the war from their own leader and then attacked important paces of pack army and carried success. Pakistani army causing heavy damages and casualties.

**Student world concern (SWC) works for liberation war**

Student World Concern (SWC), an international student organization, had worked in favor of Bangladesh's Liberation War in 1971, with branches in 19 countries including the USA, England, France and Germany. It had also played a significant role in resolving the plight of refugees who took shelter in India immediately after invasion of Pakistani occupation forces in Bangladesh and put forwarded a five-point demand before the US President Nixon to stop the killings and help the refugees. The student union started functioning with the motto of letting the pride and politics, bias and greed be set aside to ensure a better world thwarting the growth of deprivation and oppression. The union expressed grave concern over carrying out 'Operation Search Light' on 25 March midnight in 1971 and killing of thousands of innocent people saying, ‘They (Pakistani occupation forces) wasted neither time not bullets. Doctors, teachers, writers, scientists, and artistes by the thousands summarily executed.’ Pakistan Relief Centre was formed by the union to help resolving the plight of around one crore refugees who took shelter in 160 camps in West Bengal, Tripura, Assam and Meghalaya of India. It blamed the atrocities of Pakistan on Bangladeshis as the reason of the refugee problem, saying, ‘One crore people (Bangladeshis) were made refugee. It is like that half of the population of California had been forced to go in exile.’ It also criticized Pakistani occupation forces for killings lakhs of people (Student World Concern works for 1971 Liberation war, 2015).

**Conclusion**

From the very beginning student always make their first step to achieve the rights of the people of the country. Their role and contribution was the main strength of the independence of Bangladesh. Some students are so aggressive to scared our freedom that’s why we never forget them. Their fearless mentality gained our independence. They are the pride of our nation. All students plays a great role to scared a piece of land and a flag.

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