

The Bengali Language Movement :-

The Bengali Language Movement (Bhasha Andolan) was a political movement in former East Bengal, which began in 1948 and reached its climax in the killing of 21 February 1952. After years of conflict, the movement ended in the adoption of Bangla as one of the state languages of Pakistan.

Background:-

- The question of what would be the state language of Pakistan was raised immediately after its creation. The central intellectuals and Urdu-speaking intellectuals of Pakistan declared that Urdu would be the state language of Pakistan.
- The students and intellectuals of East Pakistan, however, demanded that Bangla must be the official language and the medium of instruction in East Pakistan and Bangla would be one of the state languages along with Urdu.
- The first movement on this issue was mobilized by Tamaddun-e-Urdu. It was led by Hafiz Faizur Rahman, the central education minister, initiated to make Urdu the only state language of Pakistan. On receipt of this information, East Pakistani student

came agitated and held a meeting on the Dhaka University campus on 6 December, 1997.

~~D.B.D.C.~~ The first Rastrabhasa Sangram Parishad was formed towards the end of 8 December 1997.

The Constituent (Voter) Assembly of Pakistan was held at karachi in February 1998. It was proposed that the members would have to speak either in Urdu or in English at the Assembly.

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After February 1998 :-

- Dhirendranath Datta, a member from the East Bengal Congress Party, moved an amendment motion to include Bangla as one of the languages of the Constituent Assembly.
- The motion was opposed by the central leaders, including Ali Khan, prime minister of Pakistan and Nazimuddin, chief minister of East Bengal.
- On receiving this news, intellectuals, students and politicians of East Pakistan became agitated.

Strike (11 March 1998) (12 to 15 March)

- Against:-
1. The omission of Bangla from the languages of the Constituent Assembly.
 2. The absence of Bangla letters in Pakistani coins and stamps.
 3. The use of only Urdu in recruitment tests for the navy.

- Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the governor general of Pakistan, came to visit East Pakistan on 19 March. He addressed

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meetings in Dhaka, and declared that Urdu would be the only state language of Pakistan.

→ The declaration was instantly protested with the language Marnud spreading throughout East Pakistan. They started to faith in the Muslim League. A new party was formed in 1949: 'Awami Muslim League'.

→ Dhaka University Language Action Committee was formed on 11 March, 1950.

→ There was a growing sense of deprivation and exploitation in East Pakistan and a realisation that a new form of colonialism had replaced British imperialism.

Events of 1952

→ On 27 January 1952, Khwaja Nazimuddin said that the people of the province could decide what would be the provincial language, but only Urdu would be the state language.

→ There was an instantaneous, negative reaction to this remark among the students to take a stand with

the slogan, 'Rashtraabhabha Bangla Chai'.

- A strike was observed at Dhaka University on 30 January.
- 31 January - A meeting was held between the represent of various political and cultural organisations. And 'All-Party Central Language Action Committee' was formed.
- The government also proposed that Bangla be written in Arabic script. This proposal was vehemently opposed.
- Decided to call a hartal and organise demonstrations and processions on February 21 throughout East Pakistan.
- The government imposed Section 199 in the city of Dhaka, banning all assemblies and demonstrations.
- Under the chairmanship of Abul Kashem, a meeting was held on 20 February of the committee to decide whether or not to violate Section 199.

Thousands of students from different schools and colleges of Dhaka assembled on the university campus while armed police waited outside the gate. When the students emerged in groups, shouting slogans, the police resorted to baton charge, even the female students were not spared.

→ The students then started throwing brickbats at the police, who retaliated with tear gas. The police fired upon the crowd of students.

Rafiq Uddin Ahmed, Abdul Jabbar and Abul Bark were fatally wounded.
A nine-year old boy, ^{name} Shibli was killed.

→ At the Legislative Assembly building, the session was about to begin. Hearing the news of the shooting, some members of the Assembly, including Maubantha, Rashid Tarkabagish and some opposition members, went out and joined the students.

Nurul Amin, chief minister of E.P continued to oppose the demand for Bangla.

22 February → A day of public demonstrations and police reprisal

→ The public performed a janaaza and brought out a mourning procession, which was attacked by the police and the army resulting in several deaths, including Shafiqur Rahman. Many were injured and arrested.

→ 23 February:- At the spot where students had been killed, a memorial was erected.

1963 - ~~The~~ The permanent 'Shahid Minar' was replaced by the temporary structure.

Results of the Movement: Rise of the Bengali Nationalism

→ gave rise to a new type of politician in East Pakistan

→ Throughout the Pakistan Period students often played a decisive role in turning political grievances into opposition resistances and forcing the Pakistan state to change its policies.

→ Legislative Assembly adopted a resolution to recognise of Bangla as one of the state languages of

Pakistan.

- Movement continued until 1956 Achieved its goal by forcing the Pakistan Constituent Assembly.
- With UNESCO adopting a resolution on 17 November 1999 proclaiming 21 February as 'International Mother Language Day'.
- All the above-mentioned factors significantly influenced the rise of Bengali Nationalism. Immediate outcome of this feeling was the massive win of the United Front over the Muslim League in the elections of 1959.

Conclusion

1952 Defining moment:

1. Marked a sharp psychological rupture
2. For many in Bengal & delta, it signified the shattering of the dream of Pakistan and beginning of new political project.
3. The search for a secular alternative to the communalism of Pakistan politics.

The Bengal Provincial Election of 1959

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The events of 1952 turned East Pakistanis abhorrently against the Muslim League government. This became clear to all in 1959, when East Pakistan held its first provincial elections. The elections of 1959 were also the first elections ever in the Bengal delta on the basis of a universal adult franchise.

Formation of the United Front:-

United Front was an alliance of the opposition political parties to contest the East Bengal Legislative Assembly between 8-12 March 1959. [to challenge the E.B.L.A.]

The decision to form a United Front was initially endorsed on 19 November 1953 in the council session of the Awami Muslim League in Mymensingh. Subsequently, it emerged as an effective political platform to unite decisive political groups in

The coalition consisted of:-

1. Assam Muslim League.
2. Krishak Praja Party.
3. Gramdant Dal.
4. Nizam-e-Islam.

United Front was led by three major Bengali & popular leaders-

1. K. Fazlul Haq.
2. Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy and
3. Mautana Bhashani.

Results of 1959 Elections

The election result surprised everyone as the United Front won the absolute majority. In total United Front won 215 seats out of 237 seats. On the other hand, the ruling Muslim League got only 9 seat. All 5 ministers of the Muslim League Ministry including the Chief Minister Nurul Amin were defeated.

Factors contributed to the success of the United Front.

There are many reasons behind the enormous success of the United Front in the elections of 1959. Some of those are discussed below:-

Postponements of the elections:-

The general elections to the East Bengal Legislative Assembly due in 1951 could not be held until 1959. Several postponements of the elections under various pretexts only proved malicious motives, organizational weakness and vulnerability of the ruling party.

Failure of the Muslim League:-

1. The party got detached from the mass people since 1947.
2. Many dedicated leaders and workers left ML to form new parties.
3. Muslim League was responsible for the disparity between East and West Pakistan.

economy of East Bengal deteriorated during 1947-1959. Prices of essential commodities rose sharply.

Causes behind the United Front formation:-

1. During the early period of Pakistan, East Bengal witnessed economic disparity between the two wings.

2. Poor representation of the people of East Bengal in the government and administration.

3. Politics-cultural repression pursued by the ruling elites of Pakistan.

4. Deprivation of Bengalis from due participation in decision-making process.

All these led to politics of regionalism in East Bengal and political forces of East Bengal gradually used to launch new political platforms.

Manifesto of the United Front:-

United Front's election manifesto consisted of five points. Four of these had to do with language

questions; others dealt with autonomy, citizens' rights, and economic emancipation. The economic demands reverberated strongly with the rural electorate.

The aftermath of the victory:-

The election was a signal to the end of the dominance of the national elite in the politics of East Bengal. A vast majority of the elected members were now relatively young and inexperienced in government and politics. However, within a year or so after the election, the United Front disintegrated because of clashes of personalities, intra-alliance disagreements and dissension and divergent party program.

Conclusion:-

The elections of 1959 were won by the United Front and its style of politics has dominated politics in the Bengal delta ever since. This style is best described as mobilizing the street; it demands豪華的

building up popular support by means of fiery speeches delivered at enormous public rallies, organizing protest marches and general strikes and issuing political manifestos.

SIX-POINT MOVEMENT

The six-point movement was a Bengali nationalist movement in East Pakistan spearheaded by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, which eventually led to the liberation of Bangladesh. So it is considered a milestone on the road to Bangladeshi independence.

The goal of this program - This program was a charter of demands enunciated for removing the disparity between the two wings of Pakistan. The main goal of this program was to put an end to the internal colonial rule of West Pakistan in East Bengal.

Presenting the six-point demands: The leaders of the opposition parties of West Pakistan convened a nation convention at Lahore on 6 February 1966.

Bangabandhu reached Lahore on 9 February along with the top leaders of East Awami League, and the day following he placed the Six-point charter of demand before the subject committee on the demands of the people of East Pakistan.

He created pressure to include his proposal in the agenda of the conference. The subject committee rejected the proposal of Bangabandhu.

On the next day, the newspapers of West Pakistan published reports on the Six-Point program and Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was projected as separatist framed

Understanding the Six-points

1. (Provide for a Federation of Pakistan and parliamentary form of government) :- The Constitution should provide a federation of Pakistan in its true sense on the Lahore Resolution, and the parliamentary form of government with supremacy of a Legislative directly elected on the basis of universal adult franchise.
2. (Defence & Foreign Affairs) :- The federal govt. should deal with only two subjects: Defence & Foreign franchise Affairs, and all other residuary subjects shall

be vested in the federating states.

3. (Two separate, but freely convertible currencies for two wings should be introduced): - Two separate, but if this is not feasible, there should be one currency for the whole country, but effective constitutional provisions should be introduced to stop the flight of Capital from East to West Pakistan.

4. (Taxation & revenue collection shall be vested in the federating units)

The Federal centre will have no such power on this issue. The federation will be entitled to a share in the state taxes to meet its expenditures.

5. Separate accounts for foreign exchange earnings.

The foreign exchange requirements of the federal government should be made by the two wings equally in or in a ratio to be fixed.

paramilitary force.

Events after the declaration:-

- Two booklet was published on the six-point program with introduction of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. A 'Amader Bandhan Dabi: 6-dala Kormasuchi' was published and distributed in the council meeting of Awami League on 18 March, 1966.
- Bangabandhu was arrested eight times in a span in two months and party leaders and workers were also arrested during that time.
- The opposition leaders of West Pakistan looked at six-points charter as a device to disband Pakistan and rejected outright.
- A hartal was called for June 7 across East Pakistan and all-out efforts were made to make the strike a success. On that day, police opened fire on people without any instigations. Labour, Money, Mian and 10 others were killed.

~~Ques~~ Why is it called as the Charter of Bengali's Emancipation:-

1. Agartala Conspiracy case was instigated by Ayub Govt.
2. This case led to widespread agitation in East Pakistan culminating into the mass uprising in 1969. (ESTD 1969, 01/01)
3. Under public pressure, the govt. had to release Bangabandhu unconditionally on 22 February 1971.
4. Awami League sought a public mandate in the general election of 1970 and Bangabandhu received the absolute mandate from the people of E.P.
5. Bhutto refused to join National Assembly scheduled on 3 March 1971 unless a settlement was reached between two leaders beforehand.
6. Bangabandhu and his party sat in a protracted dialogue from 15 March 1971. The dialogue failed to produce any positive result.
7. Army crackdown of 25 March sealed the fate of S.

Mass Uprising 1969

The mass uprising of 1969 was the greatest mass awakening ever since the creation of Pakistan. This democratic political movement consisted of a series of demonstration between government armed forces and the people.

Causes:-

- The Agartala conspiracy case was the main reason.
- Aim was to establish autonomy of East Bengal.
- The mass uprising started with the student arrest of 1968 against the oppressive rule of Ayub Khan President of P.
- 6 points of 1966 and 71 points of students paved the way for a mass uprising.

Goals & Objectives:-

- Full implementation of democracy.
- Establishment of autonomy in East Bengal
- Ensuring good governance.
- Eradication of anti-people forces.
- Abolition of military and civilian bureaucracy.

→ Elimination of existing inequalities.

Events:-

- 5 January - All Party Student Action Committee put forth its 11 point agenda
- 7-8 " - Formation of a political coalition named Democratic Action Committee (DAC)
- 20 " - Student activist Amanullah Acaduzzaman died as the police opened fire.
- 29 January - Matiur Rahman Mellik, a teenager activist was gunned down by the police.
- Sergeant Zahurul Haq, one of the convicts of Agartala Conspiracy Case, was assassinated in the prison.
- Professor Skensuzzoha of the University of Rajshahi was killed by the police.
- Withdrawal of Agartala Conspiracy Case.
- Sheikh Mujibur Rahman is accorded a grand reception, where he is given the title 'Bangabandhu' ^{by} in 23 February.
- Ayub Khan hands over power to Yahya Khan, the army Chief of Staff.

Results :-

→ Martial Law was re-imposed but simultaneously it was agreed that elections would be arranged soon on the basis of universal adult franchise, and parliamentary democracy would be introduced.

The demand for a separate state became stronger. Action committee proposed to change few places' name.

- Ayub Nagar to Sher-e-Bangla Nagar
- Ayub Gate to Head Gate
- Ayub children's park to Muktir children's park etc.

Also, ~~Govt~~ also General Zulfurul Haq was honoured by the naming of a students' residential hall of the University of Dhaka after him.

Along the path of this mass uprising, the Bengali nation achieved great independence through a bloody armed liberation war.

Conclusion

The racial repression and the deprivation of the Bengali within the frame work of Pakistan and, to the contrary, ~~state~~ from the language movement the feeling of separate

identity together with struggle for autonomy had direct influence on the mass upsurge of 1969.

Operation Searchlight

Operation searchlight, the ruthless and brutal armed operation undertaken by the Pakistan army on 25 March 1971 in order to curb the movement of freedom loving Bengalis against the autocratic rule of the Pakistani rulers. It was termed as 'Operation Searchlight' by the military authority. The purpose of this operation was to arrest and kill Awami League's leaders, student leaders and Bengali intellectuals in the main cities of the then East Pakistan including Dhaka. To disarm the Bengali personnels of military, para military and police forces and to capture armory, radio stations and telephone exchange, thereby to take over the control of the province of East Pakistan by ruthlessly curbing the

non-cooperation movement headed by Bangabandhu.

On the eve of the genocide on 25 March President Yahya Khan left Dhaka for Karachi. But Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, the president of the Pakistan People's Party, who came to Dhaka for having a dialogue with S.M.R. observed the operation from the Hotel Intercontinental of Dhaka. On the day following on the eve of his departure Bhutto highly appreciated the action of the army on the previous night and all the army officials including Yahya Khan expressed ovation to the army action.
(writer)

Even in the White Paper published by Pakistan Govt. on the following 5 August, the military operation on 25 March was termed as 'inevitable'.

The accurate figure of this operation could not be estimated. From the report of Simon Drug published under the

Dateline

caption ~~deslise~~ Dacca in the Daily Telegraph of 29 March it was revealed that 200 students of Gopal Hall, teachers and their family in the University residential area were killed on the night. In the Dhaka 700 people were burnt to death. Info. gathered from various ~~home~~ sources and foreign sources re that almost seven thousand Bengali were killed in Dhaka city itself.

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