

Discrimination toward East Pakistan

The Pakistan state emerged from the proposals made in Lahore Resolution. However, East Bangla did not get the status of a separate sovereign state as was mentioned in the fundamentals of the Lahore Resolution. East Bangla had to strive for autonomy through movements and agitations for 24 long years. During this long period, West Pakistani rulers adopted the policy of discrimination and oppression against the people of East Pakistan in **political, administrative, military, economic, educational, and cultural** areas. In protest of this, the movement for autonomy and independence originated in East Pakistan

Political Discrimination:

Since its emergence in 1947, East Pakistan was made crippled politically and kept dependent on West Pakistan. Though it was mentioned in the Lahore Resolution that the states were to be autonomous, Pakistani rulers were reluctant about this matter from the very beginning. They defied democracy and continued ruling the country through autocracy and military rule. They imposed a colonial rule on East Pakistan and worked for the prosperity of West Pakistan by depriving the East in every field of social, political and economic activities. They created a stalemate in the political atmosphere of East Pakistan by oppressing and suppressing the political leaders. They repeatedly sent the national leaders, including Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, to illegitimate imprisonments.

In spite of being the majority, Bengalis had very few representatives in the Cabinet of Pakistan. To create hindrance to the democratic process, Pakistani rulers showed their unwillingness to hold elections for the National and Provincial Legislative Assemblies. They removed the elected government of Juktafront from power unlawfully in 1954. Later they dissolved the East Pakistan cabinets repeatedly to collapse the governance. Finally, the Government of Pakistan imposed martial law and withheld people's democratic rights.

Administrative Discrimination:

In 1962 there were only 119 Bengalis among 954 high-ranking officials in the Ministries. In the central government offices, there were 42,000 employees; among them, only 2,900 were Bengalis. As the capital was set up in Karachi in 1947, the West Pakistanis got employment on a large scale in all government offices. It may not be mentioned that the West Pakistanis enjoyed the absolute right to hold almost all high positions in the central government offices. All the head-offices were in West Pakistan. It was not possible for the Bengalis to go there to compete for a job because of the geographical distance. As Bangla did not get the status of the state language in Pakistan till 1956, success in the competitive exams for government jobs was not easy for the Bengalis.

In East and West Pakistan number of gazetted officials was 1338 and 3708, respectively; and the number of non-gazetted officials was 26310 and 82944. In the Foreign Service in 1962, there was only 20.8% representation of East Pakistan. In embassies in foreign countries, there were 60 ambassadors from West Pakistan out of 69.

Discrimination in the Army:

Representation of Bengalis in the army was very negligible. From the beginning, Punjabis had been occupying the top posts of the army. They resorted to the policy of keeping a distance from Bengalis. In the recruitment policy of the army, they adopted a quota system allocating 60% Punjabis, 35% Pathans, and only 5% from other parts of the whole of Pakistan, including East Pakistan. There was a very negligible increase in the number as a consequence of the pressing demands of the Bengalis. A census in 1955 revealed that among 2211 army officers, Bengalis were only 82. In 1966 there was only one Bengalis among the 17 top-ranking officials. During this time, only 5% of the army officers were Bengalis. Among the total 5, 00,000 soldiers of the army, Bengalis were only 20,000 figuring only a 4% representation. East Pakistan did not get appropriate attention in the budget allocations for the army too. During Ayub Khan's regime, 60% of the total outlay of the government was allocated to the army. East

Pakistan was liable for supplying the major part of the budget, but the defense of East Pakistan suffered from negligence.

Economic Disparity:

East Pakistan suffered from the highest disparity caused by West Pakistan in economic affairs. The degree of exploitation by West Pakistan was terrible. As a result, East Pakistan could never be economically self-sufficient. The provincial government did not have any authority to exercise currency management and economic control. Under the supervision of the central government, all types of income from East Pakistan were drained to West Pakistan. Head offices of banks, insurance, and commercial organizations, including The Central Bank, were in West Pakistan, for this money was laundered to West Pakistan very easily. East Pakistan had to depend on West Pakistan for the required monetary allocations. The surplus financial savings remained deposited in West Pakistan, and for this, East Pakistan never had any growth in capital formation.

All types of planning were designed and prepared at the headquarters of the Central Government in West Pakistan. As there was no representation of the Bengalis, West Pakistan rulers deprived East Pakistanis of their lawful rights. Since its inception, three five-year plans have been adopted in Pakistan. In the first one, the government outlay from budget allocations in East and West Pakistan was 113 crore and 500 crore, respectively. In the second one, the budget allocations were 950 crores for East Pakistan and 1350 crores for West Pakistan. The budget allotments in the third five-year plan were 36% and 63%, respectively. The maximum portion of the allocated outlay for the renovation and development of the capital was for West Pakistan. 570 crore taka was spent in 1956 for the development works in Karachi, which was 56.4% of the total government expenditure. At that time, the rate of total government expenditure in East Pakistan was 5.10%.

300 crore taka was spent for constructing Islamabad till 1967, whereas the money spent on Dhaka was 25 crore taka. In the matter of allocating foreign remittance/aid, East Pakistan got only 26.6%. During the period 1947-1970, East Pakistan contributed 54.7% of the total income from exports. Though East Pakistan exported more, it had only a 31.1% share of the total imports. The surplus from exports was spent on the imports of West Pakistan. Though low-cost raw materials were available in East Pakistan, most of the mills and factories were set up in West Pakistan. West Pakistanis owned the few industries that grew in East Pakistan. So, for industrial matters, the East had to rely on the West. There was no barrier for anyone who went to West Pakistan to take gold and money with him/her, but there were government restrictions on bringing gold and money from West Pakistan.

Disparity in Education:

Bengalis experienced discrimination in the field of education too. West Pakistanis continued their attempts with the plan to keep Bengalis illiterate, whereas they chalked out massive plans for the spread of education in West Pakistan. They did not undertake any plan for the improvement of education in East Pakistan. Besides, they attempted to strike the education system of East Pakistan by replacing Urdu as the medium of education. They also conspired to introduce a system of writing Bangla in the Arabic language. In the matter of allocating the budget for education, extreme disparity was maintained between the two wings of Pakistan. From the total allocation for education from 1955 to 1967, a sum of 2084 million rupees was allotted for West Pakistan in contrast to 797 million rupees for East Pakistan. West Pakistan got 90% scholarships, and East Pakistan received 10%.

Social Discrimination:

West Pakistanis enjoyed more privileges than Bengalis in the field of roads and highways, schools colleges, courts and offices, hospitals, postal services, telephone, telegraph, electricity, etc. Most West Pakistanis got the benefit of social welfare and service-oriented activities. As a result, West Pakistanis enjoyed a better living standard.

Cultural Disparity:

The language, literature, and culture of the two wings of Pakistan were quite different. East Pakistan had 56% of the total population. Moreover, the Bangla language and culture have a heritage of thousands of years. On the other hand, 44% of the total population lives in West Pakistan, but there exist different languages, nationalities, and cultures. Urdu-speaking people were only 3.27%. Still, West Pakistani rulers engaged themselves in conspiring to wipe out the Bangla language, which the majority of people used to speak as well as the highly enriched Bengali culture.

In the very beginning, they tried to eradicate the Bangla language and had the attempt to use the Arabic alphabet in writing Bangla. Though Tagore's songs, plays, and literature heightened Bengali culture, they attempted to forbid them to give a blow to Bengali culture. They even tried to create hindrances in the celebration of Pahela Baishakh, mentioning that the festivity had a Hindu influence.