

United Front In 1954

- ▶ Political tensions came to a head as elections to the provincial assembly of East Bengal were held in 1954.
- ▶ The ruling Muslim League denounced the opposition United Front coalition, which—led by A. K. Fazlul Huq and the Awami League
- ▶ It wanted greater provincial autonomy.
- ▶ The United Front won a vast majority of seats in the legislative assembly.

United Front In 1954

- ▶ The United Front ministry ordered the creation of the Bangla Academy to promote, develop, and preserve Bengali language, literature, and heritage.
- ▶ The United Front rule was temporary, as Governor General Ghulam Muhammad cancelled the government and started Governor's rule on 30 May 1954.
- ▶ The United Front again formed the ministry on 6 June 1955 after the governor's regime ended.

Constitution Reform

- ▶ Following the return of the United Front to power, the anniversary on 21 February 1956 was observed for the first time in a peaceful atmosphere.
- ▶ Bengali was recognised as the second official language of Pakistan on 29 February 1956, and
- ▶ Article 214(1) of the constitution of Pakistan was reworded to "The state language of Pakistan shall be Urdu and Bengali."

Bangla as State language

At last, the Government of Nurul Amin adopted a resolution in the Provincial Assembly to the effect that a proposal would be raised at the Constituent Assembly containing the demand to accord Bengali the status of one of the state languages of Pakistan. In the face of continuous student's and people's Movements the Pakistan Government was compelled to give Bengali the status of one of the state languages.

Finally, Bengali was given the status of one of the state languages in the Constitution of Pakistan of 1956.



Significance and Achievements

The Language Movement of 1952 was the first organized expression of the consciousness of the exploited and deprived masses of Bangladesh. This consciousness born out of the Language Movement inspired all the subsequent Movements and helped to achieve the political, the cultural and the economic freedom leading to independence.

- ❑ This movement laid a major foundation of our liberation war.
- ❑ On February 29, 1956: Recognition made on the Pakistan constitution that “The state language of Pakistan shall be Urdu and Bengali.”
- ❑ UNESCO recognized 21st February as International Mother Language Day in 1999.
- ❑ International Status of Bangla Language (*Sierra Leone*)

This movement acted as the inspirational for the following movements:

- ❑ Landslide victory in the provincial election in 1954 (In the East Bengal Legislative Assembly the United Front got 236 out of 309 seats)
- ❑ Constitutional Movement in 1956
- ❑ Education Movement in 1962
- ❑ Six-points Movement in 1966
- ❑ Mass-uprising in 1969
- ❑ Great victory in 1971



Discriminations against East Pakistan



Form the very beginning, Pakistan had been following a policy of partition against East Pakistan. Political, military, administrative and economic discrimination had been increasing gradually. Bengalis were beginning to perceive that they were being discriminated against in business, government service and all spheres of trade and commerce. Because Karachi was the capital of Pakistan, Bengalis were being deprived of all sorts of advantages.

"..., food scarcity was recorded in many places. In particular, people of Faridpur, Comilla and Dhaka districts were facing a calamity due to acute shortage of food grain. On that time, government introduced the 'Cordon System'. This meant that there was to be no movement of food from one district to another." (Rahman 2012. P. 103)

The disparities between West Pakistan and East Pakistan will be described in the next slides.

Socio-Cultural Disparity

Bengali was the mother tongue of 56 percent of the people of Pakistan. On the other hand, Urdu was the mother tongue of only 6 percent people of the whole of Pakistan (Census 1951). Thus Bengali, in spite of being the language of the majority of the people of Pakistan, was ignored by the Pakistani ruling group as a state language which was a substantial discrimination against the people of East Pakistan. On the other hand, East Pakistan also deprived from getting reasonable facilities in various social sectors.

Sl. No	Areas	West Pakistan	East Pakistan
1	Total Population	5.50 Crore	7.50 Crore
2	Number of Doctors	12400	7600
3	Rural Health Complex	325	88
4	Social Development Centre	81	52

[Source: M.A. Rahim, *Bangladesher Itihas*, P. 480]

Political Disparity

East Pakistan became subjected to political discrimination immediately after the birth of the state of Pakistan. From 1947 to 1958, among all the presidents of Pakistan, one was from East Pakistan who spoke in Urdu.

In reality, East Pakistan was politically neglected by Pakistan from the very beginning. For example, *United Front* got 236 seats out of 309 in the provincial election in 1954 but this government could not continue more than two years.

During the regime of Liaquat Ali & Nurul Amin, 'the kind of torture and harassment of political prisoners that was going on had no precedence in any civilized country at any stage of history. Political prisoners appealed time and again for their rights and privileges people in their position enjoyed in British period. Unfortunately, their petitions were ignored.' (Rahman 2012. P. 172)

In the general elections held *on 7 December 1970*, the Awami League acquired an absolute majority. The Awami League secured 167 seats out of 169 National Assembly seats in East Pakistan and won 288 out of 300 seats in the Provincial Assembly. But Awami League did not form the government. In protest against these discriminatory policies of West Pakistan, the people of East Pakistan raised the demands for their rights of self-determination and autonomy. At this, the West Pakistani ruling clique forgot the principles of democracy and perused a policy of suppressing the just demands of the people of East Pakistan. They did not even hesitate to term Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and other patriotic leaders of this region as traitors.

Employment or Military Disparity

While the security of East Pakistan was uncertain, the province was also subjected to serious discrimination in military matters. The headquarters of the three Defense Services were established in West Pakistan. No Bengali could be found in the high posts in the Defense Services as those posts were monopolized by the West Pakistanis. In the army, **95 percent** posts were held by the West Pakistanis and East Pakistan had a share of only **5 percent**.

In administrative arena, within 1966, 77% 1st class jobs belonged to the west Pakistani whereas only 23% filled up by the East Pakistani, On the other hand, 74% for 2nd Class, 73% for 3rd Class and 70% for 4th Class jobs went to west Pakistan while remaining were for East Pakistan.

SL No.	Areas	West Pakistan	East Pakistan
1	Central Civil Jobs	84%	16%
2	Foreign Jobs	85%	15%
3	Army	95%	5%

[Source: M.A. Rahim, Bangladesher Itihas, P. 479]

Economic or Financial Disparity

During the Pakistani rule, East Pakistan was subjected to severe economic disparity. As a result, East Pakistan could never be self-sufficient economically. The provincial government did not have any control over its currency and economy. As everything was controlled by the Centre, all the income of East Pakistan flew away to West Pakistan.

Head offices of the State Bank and other banks, insurance companies, trading concerns and foreign missions were established in West Pakistan. About two thirds of the foreign exchange of Pakistan was earned by selling the jute of East Pakistan. But the jute farmers could never get the fair price for their produce.

SL. No	Areas	West Pakistan	East Pakistan
1	Foreign Currency for Development	80%	20%
2	USA Aid	56%	34%
3	House Building	88%	12%
4	Industrial Bank	76%	24%

[Source: M.A. Rahim , Bangladesher Itihas, P. 480]

Disparity in Educational facility

There were huge disparities in education sector also. The discrimination was prevailing in the area of education facility mentioned here:

Grade	East Pakistan 1968-69	West Pakistan 1968-69
University	04	09
Medical, Engineering College	09	17
Primary School	28307	39418

Source: Bangladesh documents, Ministry of External Affairs, India,
1971 (p:17)

Six Point Movement

- ▶ The **6 Point Movement** was a Bengali nationalist movement in East Pakistan spearheaded by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.
- ▶ It eventually led to the liberation of Bangladesh.
- ▶ The movement's main agenda was
 - ▶ to realize the six demands put forward by a coalition of Bengali nationalist political parties in 1966 and
 - ▶ to end the perceived exploitation of East Pakistan by the West Pakistani rulers.

Background

- ▶ Following the end of British rule in the Indian subcontinent, the new state of Pakistan came into being.
- ▶ The inhabitants of East Pakistan (later Bangladesh) made up the majority of its population, and
- ▶ Exports from East Pakistan (such as jute) were a majority of Pakistan's export income.

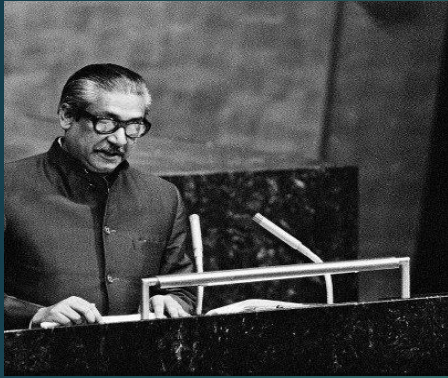
Background

- ▶ However, East Pakistanis did not feel they had a proportional share of political power and economic benefits within Pakistan.
- ▶ As a result, the economist and the politicians of East Pakistan started to raise questions about this discrimination, giving rise to the historic six-point movement.

A Statistical Overview of Economic Discrimination

Year	Spending on West Pakistan (in crore rupees)	Amount spent on West as percentage of total	Spending on East Pakistan (in crore rupees)	Amount spent on East as percentage of total
% of total population		36.23		63.77
1950–55	1,129	68.31	524	31.69
1955–60	1,655	75.95	524	24.05
1960–65	3,355	70.5	1,404	29.5
1965–70	5,195	70.82	2,141	29.18
Total	11,334	71.16	4,593	28.84

The Six-Point Movement





The Six-Point Program was a bold protest against the endless discrimination in economic, political and military sectors pursued against the people of Bengal by the Pakistani rulers. Under the leadership of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the Awami League played a historic role in redressing this discrimination and establishing the rights of the people of East Pakistan.

On 5 February 1966 opposition political parties met in a Conference in Lahore. In this Conference, Sheikh Mujib placed a Charter of Demands relating to political, economic and military rights of East Pakistan. This is known in history as the Six-Point Program.

Six Point were:


1. **Formation and Nature of the Pakistan State:** A true federal type of constitution shall have to be framed for Pakistan on the basis of the historic Lahore Resolution and the form of this Government will be Parliamentary. All elections should be held on the basis of universal adult franchise and direct voting and the sovereignty of the Legislatures shall be recognized.


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- ▶ **2. Power of the central govt.:** The Central Government shall have only two things, defense and foreign affairs; all other residuary powers shall rest with the provinces.

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- ▶ **3. Power on currency:** There shall be two separate but freely convertible currencies in the two regions of the country; or, one single currency for the whole country with the provision of two reserve banks in two provinces under a federal reserve bank.

Six Point were:

4. **Power on revenue or tax collection:**
The regional governments shall have the authority to levy all taxes and, to collect them. There shall be a provision for paying the Central Government a portion of the revenues collected.

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- ▶ **5. Power on foreign exchange:**
There should be separate accounts for the foreign exchange of the two regions. If necessary, the requirement of the Centre will be met by the two regions on the basis of equal rate or a rate as specified in the Constitution.

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- ▶ 6. **Separate military force:** The federal states should have the authority to form regional armed forces or militia or Paramilitia forces to protect the territories.

Outcomes of Six-Point Movement

For the People of East Pakistan

The oppressed and exploited people of East Pakistan welcomed this Six-Point Program as their Magna Carta or the Charter of Freedom. As a result, the popularity of the Six-Point Program increased day by day. Because-

- a) It ensured Political Development (Point 1)
- b) Administrative Development (Point 2)
- c) Financial Development (Point 3,4,5)
- d) Enlargement of Military Power (Point 6)

Finally, It was one of the major steps towards freedom of Bangladesh.

For the Government of Pakistan

The government became frightened at the popularity of the Six-Point demand and falsely termed the Six-Point demand as an anti-state Movement.

After this, the Government took recourse to repressive policy to check the Six-Point movement and arrested Sheikh Mujib along with many others on 8 May 1966. On 7 June 1966, a general hartal was called throughout the province for the release of the political prisoners.

The government imposed section 144 to prevent this hartal. But the people observed the hartal spontaneously.