

6 Point Demand

The East Bengalis political elite played an important role in the separation of East Pakistan. It was economic exploitation which gave them an ample opportunity to win over popular support. They were conscious of these distinct geographical and cultural features, and they lost no occasion to project the differences between the two wings. They highlighted the points of 'separateness' in their speeches in the Constituent Assembly and the Provincial Assemblies. For instance, Abdul Mansur Ahmad, a prominent member from East Pakistan, observed in Constituent Assembly

Pakistan is a unique country having two wings which are separated by a distance of more than a thousand miles...religion and common struggle are the only common factors... with the exception of these two things, all other factors, viz the language, the culture...practically everything is different. There is, in fact, nothing common in two wings.

Setting the Stage for Separation

After becoming the President of Awami League in 1966, Sheikh Mujibur Rehman provided further impetus to the movement of the separation of East Pakistan through his mind blowing speeches, slogans and his famous Six Point Programme. Some glimpses from his speeches are as follows. The Awami League Leader regretted that East Pakistan had to bear the country's major burden of paying off annually Rs. 100 crore interests of foreign loans although barely one-fourth of Rs. 2000 crore was spent in this wing. Other aspects of our life did not present any better picture.

He further added that the perpetuation of the exploitation of East Pakistan brought the economy of the province on the verge of ruination. East Pakistan, which used to from abroad annually while West Pakistan now produces eight hundred million tons surplus. Referring to his Six Point Programme launched four year back, said, "we plunged into the struggle to save the people from exploitation, knowing full well its consequences, which we suffered later". He told the East Bengali people that we cannot expect any genuine change for the better until we free ourselves from the clutches of the explicators and the ruling

class which ruthlessly suppressed the voice of people whenever they rose against the vested interests, looting our resources unchecked.

Sheikh Mujib said, "All our legitimate interests were made subservient to exploitation by the vested interests. He charged that our flourishing weaving industry was made to suffer decay, Salt industry destroyed and Beedi industry dragged to ruination turning millions of people into virtual distrust only to make East Pakistan serve as market to exploiters from West wing". He further regretted, "the history of East Pakistan would have been different if some political Mir Zafar did not sabotage our causes. He accused them of playing the role of agents of exploiters, who happened to come from West Pakistan. They sold out our interests for ministerial jobs".

In Dumni (Tejgoan) on October 20, 1970 Mujib told the cheering crowd who came from far flung areas in procession that the Six Point programme was to ensure justice for the people of west Bengal whose basic rights and privileges had so long been trampled underfoot. The programme, if implemented, would put an end once for all to the continued exploitation, oppression and suppression which had reigned supreme during the last many years.

In the same speech while recalling the long 23 years of independence, he said that Whenever people of Bengal raised their voices to get their due rights, lathi-charge, bullets and jails were in store for their leaders and workers and the bogey of 'Islam in danger' was raised to confound the political atmosphere of the country

Six-point Programme a charter of demands enunciated by the [awami league](#) for removing disparity between the two wings of Pakistan and to put an end to the internal colonial rule of West Pakistan in East Bengal. The leaders of the opposition parties of West Pakistan convened a national convention at Lahore on 6 February 1966 with a view to ascertain the post-Taskent political trend. Bangabandhu reached Lahore on 4 February along with the top leaders of Awami League, and the day following he placed the Six-point charter of demand before the subject committee as 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 day following, the newspapers of West Pakistan published reports on the Six-point Programme, and Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was projected as a separatist. Consequently Sheikh Mujib abandoned the conference.

The main exponents of Six Point Formula were Tajuddin Ahmed, Mujib ur Rehman, and Ruhul Quddus. Majority of party workers did not know regarding the Formula till the Council Meeting held in February, 1966. This 'programme' had an important position in the life of all classes of East Pakistani society.

The East Pakistanis welcomed the Six Points Programme whole heartedly and it gained immense kind of support for a variety of reasons. Firstly, it challenged the political and economic monopoly of West Pakistan. Secondly, the East Pakistan's export earnings would no longer be exploited and manipulated for the growth of the industrialization of West Pakistan. Thirdly, foreign aid would no longer be monopolized for West Pakistan only. Fourthly, the East Pakistan would no longer remain an inferior and sub-ordinate market for West Pakistani products. Fifthly, the end of Economic priorities determined for the advantage of West Pakistan only.

Six Point Programme proved to be a ray of hope for almost all the sections of West Bengali society and soon its survival became a matter of life and death for East Pakistanis. The emerging industrialists and businessmen found in the Six-Point formula relaxation of intense competition and short cut route to prosperity. The labor and peasants found in the formula some chances of incoming change for the better. The Formula itself helped inspiring and consolidating the nationalist forces and soon became the vehicle of Bengali nationalist movement. The programme seemed to be a well-thought out concrete manifestation of the historical urge of the Bengalis and appeared to be a more solid and straight forward scheme compared to any other political programme ever offered to the country by a political party.

The 6 points demands are:

1. Pakistan should be a federation based on Lahore resolution, and it would be a direct election system on the basis of the universal adult franchise for the parliamentary form of government (with the supremacy of legislature).
2. The federal government (central govt) should deal with only two subjects: **Defence and Foreign Affairs**, and the federating states will be responsible for all other residuary subjects.
3. Two separate, but freely convertible currencies for two wings should be introduced; or 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. Furthermore, a separate Banking Reserve should be established, and separate fiscal and monetary policy be adopted for East Pakistan.

A booklet on the Six-point Programme with introduction from Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and Tajuddin Ahmad was published. Another booklet titled Amader Banchar Dabi: 6-dafa Karmasuchi (Our demands for existence: 6-points Programme) was published in the name of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, and was distributed in the council meeting of Awami League held on 18 March 1966.

4. The power of taxation and revenue collection. **The federation would be entitled to a share in the state taxes** to meet its expenditures.
5. There should be two separate accounts for the foreign exchange earnings of the two wings;
 - the foreign exchange requirements of the federal **government should be met by the two wings equally or in a ratio to be fixed; indigenous products should move free of duty between the two wings.**
 - the constitution should empower the units to establish trade links with foreign countries.
6. East Pakistan should have a separate military or paramilitary force, and Navy headquarters should be in East Pakistan.

The proposal was rejected by politicians from West Pakistan and non Awami League politicians from East Pakistan. It was rejected by the President of All Pakistan Awami League [Nawabzada Nasarullah Khan](#). It was also rejected by [National Awami Party](#), [Jamaat-i-Islami](#), and [Nizam-i-Islam](#).

The movement had the support of the population of East Pakistan.