

HIS-103: Emergence of Bangladesh

Lecture 10 Six Point Program 1966



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Course Teacher

Genesis of Six Point Program

- West Pakistani domination in the political and cultural life was already a sore point. Economic exploitation of East Pakistan by West Pakistan was already beyond the limits of tolerance. On top of these, there was no sign of the evolution of a common social denominator except religion. Under these circumstances, the choice for the Bangalees was a very large measure of self-rule.

Year	Spending on West Pakistan (in Crore Rupees)	%	Spending on East Pakistan (in Crore Rupees)	%
1950-55	1129	68.31	524	31.69
1955-60	1655	75.95	524	24.05
1960-65	3355	70.50	1404	29.50
1965-70	5195	70.82	2141	29.18
Total	11,334	71.16%	4,593	28.84%

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Rank (in 1956)	East	West	East % Of Total
Secretary	0	19	0%
Joint Secretary	3	38	7.3%
Deputy Secretary	10	123	7.5%
Undersecretary	38	510	7.0%

Defense Service (in 1955)	East	West
Army	14	894
Navy	7	593
Air Force	60	640

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Post (in 1965)	East	West	East % Of Total
Central Secretariat	42	692	5.72%
Pakistan Radio	14	98	12.5%
Railway	14	158	8.14%
1 st Class Officer	811	3769	17.71%
2 nd Class Officer	884	4805	15.53%
2 nd Class Non-gazette Officer	1180	5551	17.53%
3 rd Class Non-gazette Officer	13724	137975	9.04%
High School	90	653	12.11%
College	31	114	21.38%
Pilot (civil)	75	1025	6.82%
Post & Telegraph	50	279	15.19%

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It was the Indo-Pak War of 1965 which finally prepared the ground for a careful redefinition of regional autonomy necessary for the divided polity of Pakistan. East Pakistan was left totally defenseless and security of some seventy million Bangalees had to be guaranteed not by the vast war machines of Pakistan who went to fight for the right of self-determination of two million Kashmiris but by secret negotiations between the USA and Chinese diplomats in Warsaw. For 17 days of the war 70 million Bangalees lived in utmost fear of Indian attack.

- The war also proved how vulnerable East Pakistan was with respect to communication with the world. It was totally isolated from the world for about a month. East Pakistan's links with the world were through West Pakistan and these were cut off by the war. Her total dependence on West Pakistani products and services imposed severe strains on the economy as well.
- There was also a political vacuum in the country as all powers rested with the central government and the President who were out of contact with the province. This was the last straw on the camel's back.

The Six Point Program

- The Indo-Pak War of 1965 ended with the execution of Tashkent Treaty. To the old grievances of economic disparity added the complain of negligence and indifference of central government towards the defense of East Pakistan. Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was vocal on this issue.
- 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-Tashkent political trend.
- Sheikh Mujib reached Lahore on 4 February along with Tajuddin Ahmed and Nurul Islam Choudhury 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.
- The subject committee led by Conference Chair Choudhury Mohammad Ali rejected the proposal. Even they denied to add the proposal in the agenda. Being irritated, Sheikh Mujib walked out from the meeting and disclosed the proposal through a press briefing.
- On the day following, the newspapers of West Pakistan published reports on the Six-point Program, and Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was projected as a separatist. Consequently Sheikh Mujib did not join the conference.

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- Sheikh Mujib came back to Dhaka on February 11 and by that time the walls of Dhaka have been covered with slogans and posters like "বাঙালির দাবি ছয় দফা" এবং "পূর্ব পাকিস্তানের স্বায়ত্তশাসনের গ্যারান্টি ছয় দফা".
- The Six-point Program along with a proposal of movement for the realization of the demands was placed before the meeting of the working committee of Awami League on 21 February 1966, and the proposal was carried out unanimously.
- A booklet on the Six-point Program 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 Program) was published in the name of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, and was distributed in the council meeting of Awami League held on 18 March 1966.

Six-Point Program

- 1. The Constitution should provide for a Federation of Pakistan in its true sense on the Lahore Resolution, and the parliamentary form of government with supremacy of a Legislature directly elected on the basis of universal adult franchise.
- 2. The federal government should deal with only two subjects: Defense and Foreign 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; 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.

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- 4. The power of taxation and revenue collection shall be vested in the federating units and the federal center will have no such power on the issue. The federation will 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, and the Constitution should empower the units to establish trade links with foreign countries.
- 6. East Pakistan should have a separate militia or paramilitary force.

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- The opposition leaders of West Pakistan looked at Mujib's Six-point Program as a device to split Pakistan, and therefore they rejected his proposal outright.
- The Ayub government projected Sheikh Mujib as a separatist and later filed the Agartala conspiracy case against him. He was arrested and put on trial.
- The Awami League sought public mandate in favor of the Six-point Program in the general elections of 1970 in which Sheikh Mujib received the absolute mandate from the people of East Pakistan in favor of his Six-point.

Background of Formulating Six Point

- There has been a lot speculation about the genesis of the Six Point Program. It has been suggested that some of Ayub Khan's associates thought of it and the name of the Information Secretary Altaf Gauhar was usually cited.
- Others thought that this was the work of some senior Bangalee civil servants notably Ruhul Quddus who became the first Chief Secretary of the Bangladesh Government.
- Even some gave the credit to US intervention, i.e., CIA.
- The leftists, especially pro-Moscow group were also considered as proponents of the program.
- Some also believed that veteran AL leader Khan Saheb Qorban Ali had a catalytic role in putting the program together.
- It is true that many AL leaders were not aware about this when it was announced by Sheikh Mujib in Lahore. Only his close associates knew about it. *[for more please see the handout pp.140-142]*