

HIS-103: Emergence of Bangladesh

Lecture 12

11-point Movement of Students & Mass Upsurge of 1969 & Fall of Ayub Khan



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Background

- Eleven Points Program a charter of demand framed as a remedy to acute economic disparity between East and West Pakistan and as a program for putting an end to the autocratic Ayub regime. The Six-point Movement of Awami League under the leadership of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman initiated in 1966, suffered a temporary pause due to en masse arrest of the Awami League leaders including Bangabandhu, framing of Agartala conspiracy case in 1968 and repression on the Awami League activists.
- The situation led to the formation of Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM)—a front of Council Muslim League, Anti-6-point faction of Awami League, Jamaat-e-Islami, Nezam-e-Islam and National Democratic Front—and the Democratic Action Committee (DAC)—PDM is joined by three other parties which were Jamiat-e-Ulema-e-Islam, NAP and Awami League (pro-6-point). But when PDM and DAC ultimately failed to intensify the movement against the autocratic Ayub government, the students of Dhaka University organized a united movement in 1968 which soon turned into a mass movement.
- In October 1968, the East Pakistan Students League and the Menon and Matia group of East Pakistan Students Union formed a political alliance. These two student organizations jointly formed the '*Chhatra Sangram Parishad*' in January 1969 and declared an eleven points charter of demand.

11-point Demands

1. (a) To abandon the policy of provincialization of the financially solvent colleges and to deprovincialize the colleges hitherto provincialized including the Jagannath College.
 - (b) To establish schools and colleges throughout the province especially in rural areas for ensuring wider scope for spread of education and to give early approval to the schools and colleges established by private initiative. To establish adequate number of engineering colleges, polytechnic, technical and commercial institutes for providing wider scope for technical education.
 - (c) To open IA, ISc, ICom and BA, BSc, BCom night classes in second shift in colleges of the province and to open MA and MCom classes in night shift in the established colleges.
 - (d) To reduce 50% of the tuition fee and to increase the number of scholarship and stipend. Award of scholarship and stipend to any student shall not be seized for his participation in student movement.
 - (e) To pay 50% of the charges of hall, dining hall and canteen of hostels by the government as 'subsidy'.
 - (f) To solve accommodation problem in halls and hostels.
 - (g) To arrange for teaching at all levels of education through the medium of mother tongue. To introduce Bangla as the medium of exchange in offices and courts. To arrange for sufficient number of experienced teachers in all the educational institutions. To enhance the salary of the teachers, and to ensure right of expression of their free opinion.

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- (h) To provide for tuition-fees free and compulsory education upto class viii. To expand the scope for female education.
- (i) To establish medical university, and to fulfill the demands of the medical students, such as abolition of automation system, closing of system of admission by nomination, annulment of Medical Council Ordinance, elevation of dental college to full-fledged college, etc. To fulfill all the demands of the nurse-students.
- (j) To abolish automation system in engineering education, annulment of 10% and 75% rule, proper arrangement of central library, and to fulfill all demands of the engineering students including demand for introduction of class gradation in final year.
- (k) To give facilities of 'condensed course' to the polytechnic students and to issue diploma only on the basis of semester examinations having the Board final examination system withdrawn.
- (l) To fulfill immediately all the demands of the students of Textile, Ceramic, Leather technology and Art College. To fulfill ten points demand of the IER, and to fulfill all the demands of the social welfare students, MBA students and of law students. To bifurcate the Commerce Department as separate 'faculty' in all the universities including the Dhaka University.
- (m) To fulfill the legitimate demands of the students of agricultural schools and colleges, and to fulfill all the demands of the agricultural students including the demand for condensed course of agricultural diploma students.

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- (n) To arrange for tickets at 50% concession to the students travelling on train, steamer and launch on display of their identity card. Concession is to be made admissible in monthly tickets also. As in West Pakistan, the students should be allowed to travel any where within the town at 10 paisa fare. Concession in fare at the rate of 50% should be allowed in bus journey in remote areas. Adequate number of buses should be arranged for the school and college going female students. The students attending as spectators at any sports and cultural functions arranged by the government or any semi-government concerns, should be entitled to 50% concession in tickets.
- (o) To arrange for surety of job.
- (p) To annul the defamed university ordinances and to ensure full autonomy to the educational institutions including the universities.
- (q) To reject the National Education Commission Report and the Hamoodur Rahman Commission Report, representing an authentic document of astringent education policy of the ruling class, and to introduce people-oriented and scientific education system for the greater interest of the student community and the people.
- 2. To establish parliamentary democracy through direct election on adult franchise. To promote liberty of speech, personal liberty and liberty of press. To withdraw prohibitive order imposed upon the Ittefaq.
- 3. To give full autonomy to East Pakistan on the basis of fulfillment of the following demands:
 - The constitutional structure of the country shall be a federation of states and the power of the legislature shall be supreme.
 - (b) The jurisdiction of the federal government shall be limited to defence, foreign policy and currency, and the power of the federating states shall be supreme in all matters.

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- ➡ (c) Common currency shall be in circulation in two wings of the country having the system under the jurisdiction of the center. But there should be specific provision in the Constitution so that the currency of East Pakistan cannot be laundered to West Pakistan. Under this system there shall be a federal reserve bank in Pakistan. There will be two separate reserve banks in two wings, and separate economy for East Pakistan shall have to be introduced.
- ➡ (d) The fixation of all kinds of taxes, land revenue and duties, and the collection of such taxes shall be vested with the regional government. The Federal government shall have no power to fix and impose any tax. A fixed portion of the revenue collected by the regional government shall immediately be deposited to the federal fund. Mandatory rules on the reserve banks to that end shall be incorporated in the Constitution.
- ➡ (e) Each of the **federating states** shall maintain separate accounts of external trade, and the remittance earned through external trade will lie with the federating states. The federating states shall provide for the necessary foreign currency to the **federal government** equally or as prescribed in the specific Article of the Constitution. The inter states import and export of inland commodities shall be free of custom duties. Provision shall have to be made in the Constitution guarantying the exclusive right of the federating states in executing trade agreements with the foreign states, establishing trade mission abroad, and in conducting import and export trade.
- ➡ (f) To provide East Pakistan with an authority of forming a militia or para-military *Raksi Bahini*. To establish ordnance factory and the naval headquarters in East Pakistan.

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- 4. To constitute sub-federation by giving autonomy to all the provinces including Baluchistan, North-West Frontier Province and Sind of West Pakistan.
- 5. To nationalize bank, insurance, jute trade and large-scale industries.
- 6. To reduce the rate of land revenue and taxes imposed upon the peasants, and to exempt arrear land tax and outstanding debt. To annul the certificate system and to stop the repression of the tahsildars. To fix the minimum price of jute at taka 40 per maund and to ensure legitimate price of sugar-cane.
- 7. To pay legitimate wage and bonus to the laborer and to arrange for their education, housing, medical treatment etc. To withdraw all black-laws detrimental to the interest of the laborer, and to ensure their right to strike and right to trade union activities.
- 8. To take steps towards flood control measures in East Pakistan, and to ensure overall utilization of water resources.
- 9. To withdraw Emergency Act, Safety Act and other repressive Acts.
- 10. To annul SEATO, CENTO agreements, Pak-American Military Pact and to ensure non-aligned independent and neutral foreign policy.
- 11. To release immediately all the students, laborer, peasants, political activists and leaders, detained in different jails of the country, to repeal warrant and *hulia*, and to withdraw all the cases instituted on political grounds including the Agartala Conspiracy Case.

Aftermath

- The Six Points demand of Awami League had its wide reflection on the Eleven Points demand of the *Chhatra Sangram Parishad*. The demands relating to the interest of the Bangalee middle class peasants and workers were also included in the Eleven Points demand.
- Consequently, the Eleven Points movement addressed wide public support in East Pakistan, and the leadership of the anti-Ayub movement virtually came within the grip of the student leaders.
- The student movement was initiated in October 1968, reached its climax in January 1969, and by mid January culminated into a mass movement.
- The Eleven Points movement of the students had direct contribution towards preparing the background of the War of Liberation.

Mass Upsurge of 1969

- Mass Upsurge, 1969 started with the student unrest of 1968 against the tyrannical rule of Ayub Khan, President of Pakistan. The student agitation of 1968 turned into a mass upsurge when Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhasani asked his followers to besiege Governors House, and formulated and declared his other programs.
- Immediately after the 11-Point program had been launched on 8 January 1969 eight political parties, including Awami League and NAP (Muzaffar) formed the Democratic Action Committee (DAC). They demanded Federal form of government, election on the basis of universal adult franchise, immediate withdrawal of emergency and release of all political detainees including Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Khan Abdul Wali Khan and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. They took the decision to invigorate the movement to achieve their goal. But some rightist parties in the DAC refused to support the 11-Point program of the SAC. In spite of that the movement gradually got momentum and the spirit of 11- points reached every nook and corner of the province. Even a portion of the pro-government student front NSF came forward with their 22-point program and openly opposed the government. To voice the protest against government repression the students arranged a meeting at the Dhaka University campus and resolved to bring out a procession. In the procession police opened fire and Asaduzzaman, a leader of the Students Union (Menon), was killed.

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- The death of Asad stirred the entire nation and the movement took the shape of a national upsurge. The situation of Dhaka went beyond control of the police when Matiur, a student of class IX, died of police firing on 24 January and Rustam was stabbed to death. Army was deployed in the city and curfew was imposed for an indefinite period. Indiscriminate firing of the army and the EPR caused death to a woman while sucking her baby. The incidence caused widespread repercussions in the socio-political arena. Sergeant Zahurul Huq, an under-trial prisoner in the Agartala Conspiracy Case, died of bullet injury in the Dhaka Cantonment on 15 February 1969.
- The death of an under-trial prisoner was so provocative that Maulana Bhasani declared from a public meeting held that very evening that there will be no payment of taxes if the 11-point demands were not fulfilled and all political prisoners were not released within two months. He further declared, if necessary, Sheikh Mujib would be forcibly taken out of jail repeating what happened at the falling of the Bastille during the French Revolution. After the meeting people began to set on fire the houses of the ministers. On 18 February 1969 Dr. Mohammad Shamsuzzoha, Proctor of the Rajshahi University, was bayoneted to death. The news spread like wild fire throughout the country. Thousands of people thronged the Dhaka streets and highways ignoring curfew.

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- In this struggle for democracy and endeavor to get rid of tyranny the toiling masses of the rural areas did not stop at merely chanting slogans against oppressive government but also raised their voice against the oppressing class or its representatives.
- The situation took such a dimension that in many cases the peasants, with the assistance of students, killed cattle lifters, burnt them or set their houses on fire, crippled the thieves and robbers and sometimes even killed them. In several places the students with the assistance of peasants put on trial the local tax-collectors, the subordinate police and their officers, circle officers and moved them around market places garlanding them with shoes. Students exacted from them the amount they had taken as bribes, sometimes they were fined.
- Students forced chairmen and members of union councils to resign, removed brothels and wiped out liqueur shops. In the urban areas corrupt officials were bodily manhandled, their record books ransacked and sometimes even set on fire. Low-income groups and mid-level employees chanted for their long cherished but unfulfilled demands and joined the processions in the highways, thousands of workers used the gherao movement as the fruitful means of achieving their demands.

Mass Upsurge of 1969

- 4 January 1969: *Shorbodolio Chatro Shongram Porishad* (The All-Party Student Action Committee) puts forth its 11-point agenda.
- 7–8 January 1969: Formation of a political coalition named Democratic Action Committee (DAC) to restore democracy.
- 20 January 1969: Student activist Asaduzzaman dies as the police opens fire on demonstrators.
- 24 January 1969: Matiur, a teenager activist, is gunned down by the police.
- 15 February 1969: Sergeant Zahurul Haq, one of the convicts of Agartala Conspiracy Case, is assassinated in the prison of Kurmitola Cantonment.
- 18 February 1969: Dr. Shamsuzzoha of Rajshahi University is killed as the police open fire on a silent procession in Rajshahi.
- 21 February 1969: Historic statement by Ayub Khan admitting that his system of governance had not been successful, and he would not seek re-election.
- 22 February 1969: Withdrawal of Agartala Conspiracy Case and all the accused were set free.
- 23 February 1969: Sheikh Mujibur Rahman is accorded a grand reception, where he is given the title Bangabandhu (friend of Bengal) from the *Shorbodolio Chatro Shongram Porishad*.
- 10–13 March 1969: Ayub Khan calls for a round-table meeting with the opposition.
- 25 March 1969: Ayub Khan hands over power to General Yahya Khan, the army Chief of Staff.

Fall of Ayub Khan

- In these circumstances Sheikh Mujib came out of jail and declared his intention to join the Round Table Conference (RTC) summoned by Ayub. He asked the people to maintain peace and order. Maulana Bhasani, on the other hand, refused to join the RTC and was dubbed as the 'prophet of violence' when he, as per his usual thoughts and principles, declared the 1969 upsurge as the struggle between the oppressor and the oppressed.
- In the long run the strongman of Pakistan, General Ayub Khan, had to hand over power to General Yahya Khan, chief of Pakistan Army on 25 March 1969. Martial Law was re-imposed, but simultaneously it was agreed that elections would be arranged soon based on universal adult franchise, and parliamentary democracy would be introduced.
- Fear of police and civil and military bureaucrats minimized to a very great extent from the minds of the people, and in the estimation of the people the bureaucrats lost much of their image and importance especially in the rural areas. Moreover, class consciousness grew and advanced a step forward. The demand for a separate state became stronger than ever before among the people of Eastern Bengal. Bangalee nationalism became sufficiently strong to sustain during the war of liberation in 1971.