

History of Bangladesh(1947-1971)

History of Emergence of Bangladesh

Resolution of the identity Crisis

- Pakistan, which emerged constitutionally as one of country in 1947, was in fact “a double country” the two wings were not only separated from each other by more than one thousand miles, they were also culturally, economically and socially different.

Resolution of the identity Crisis

- The creation of East Pakistan did not resolve the identity crisis of the majority people in the Bangladesh region. This compounded the dichotomy of language and religion. Democratic verdicts were brushed aside and economic disparity between the two wings widened under the aegis of military dictatorships in Pakistan.
- The way in which Bangladesh was born is unique to South Asia. Bangladesh was the product of a sanguinary revolution. The birth of Bangladesh resolved the dichotomy between religion and habitat.

Two Nation Theory

- Two-Nation theory is the basis of creation of Pakistan. It states that Muslims and Hindus are two separate nations, therefore Muslims should have a separate homeland in the Muslims majority areas of Bangladesh, where they can spend their lives according to the glorious teachings of Islam. It was Mohammad Ali Jinnah who preached the idea that Hindus and Muslims of this continent were two separate nations.

Two Nation Theory

- Bases of 'nationalism' or 'nation state':
- Geographical
- Lingual
- Racial
- But in 'the Two Nation Theory' concept of Pakistan Nation was built up on the basis of 'Religion'. The concept to unite two distant lands (East and West Pakistan) as a united nation was not a wise step to take and history supports the fact. The two wings of Pakistan were very distinct in terms of geographic condition, cultural traits, language and many other socio-economical-political features.

Language Movement

- Tamaddun Majlish, a cultural organization of Dhaka University published on 15th September 1947, entitled “state language of Pakistan-Bengali or Urdu?” A resolution on language was also published in that pamphlet. The following was the resolution:
- Bengali shall be medium of education, court and also the official language of East Pakistan.
- Language of Central Government shall be both Urdu and Bengali.
- In East Pakistan, Bengali shall be the first language, Urdu shall be second and English shall be third.
- In West Pakistan, Urdu shall be first language, Bengali shall be second and English shall be third language.

Language Movement

- In February 1948, a member of Constituent Assembly, Dharendra Nath Dutta, moved an amendment to the assembly rules to provide for the use of Bengali along with Urdu in the proceedings of Constituent Assembly.
- The Prime Minister, Liaquat Ali Khan replied that Pakistan was created because of the demand of hundred million Muslims in the subcontinent and it is necessary to have one language and Urdu will be the only language of Pakistan. He totally forgot that 54% of population of Pakistan who inhabit East Pakistan do not speak Urdu or understand it.

Language Movement

- On 21st March 1948, at the convocation of Dhaka University, Jinnah said that people of this province shall decide what will be their language of province, but the state language of Pakistan will be Urdu and no other languages. Students protested his words and they were saying-‘No, No’. There were demonstrations against Jinnah’s views on language and some students were arrested.

Language Movement

- The people of East Bengal came to feel that Pakistan would not be run on democratic lines. Jinnah made the declaration without consulting or without approval of the Constituent Assembly.
- In 1949-50 serious attempt was made by the Government of Pakistan with the help top officers of East Bengal Government who were non-Bengalis to introduce Bengali in Arabic script.
- It was unimaginable audacity of non-Bengali people to ask Bengali Muslims to forget their mother tongue and their script.

Language Movement

- The first interim report of Basic Principles Committee presented in September 1949 recommended that Urdu shall be the only state language of Pakistan. There was a sharp and instant protest from East Bengal against the interim report.
- Mujtasba Ali warned in his article “Purba Pakistasner Rastra Vasha” that if Urdu speaking people force Urdu on the shoulders of East Pakistan, then one day people of East Pakistan will revolt. Pakistan Government forced Mujtaba Ali to leave the country for the article.

Language Movement

- After the death of Liakat Ali, next Prime Minister, Nazimuddin declared at Dhaka in a meeting on 26th January 1952 that Urdu alone should be the state language of Pakistan.
- His declaration fanned the rage of the community and of all Bengalis. This culminated in the shooting near Dhaka Medical College on 21st February 1952 when some people including students were killed as a result of police firing.

Language Movement

- That was the start of vigorous agitation against conspiracy to throttle the voice of East Bengal people.
- Finally Bengali was accepted as one of the state Languages along with Urdu in the constitution of Pakistan in 1956 after long drawn and bitter battle for about nine years.
- Though Bengali was accepted as one of the state languages, irreparable damage had already been done to the relationship of East Pakistan with West Pakistan.

Election of 1954/United Front(Jukto front)

- The first election of East Bengal (now Bangladesh, later in 1955 renamed as East Pakistan) provincial Assembly was held in 1954 (March) under the provision of reserved seats for non-muslims.
- The number of seats for the Assembly was fixed at 309. Of these 237 (9 women member) were Muslim seats, 69 (3 women) seats for Hindus, 2 for Budhists and 1 for Christianns.

Election of 1954/United Front (Jukto front)

- The Awami Muslim League (renamed in 1955 as Awami League) headed by Hussain Shaheed Suhrawardy and Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhasani, Krishak Sramik Party headed by Fazlul Huq and Nizami Islam and Ganatantric Dal formed United front/Jukto front to beat Muslim League.

Election of 1954/United Front (Jukto front)

- The United Front got 222 out of 237 Muslim seats.
- The United Front got the opportunity to form the provincial government after winning absolute majority in the 1954 election and Fazlul Huq formed the Government with a 14 member cabinet.
- But it lasted for only 14 days.
- The Muslim League could not concede defeat in the elections in good grace.
- So they resorted to conspiracies to dismiss the United Front.
- Finally United Front government was dismissed and Governor's rule was imposed in the province till 1955. Naturally United Front broke.

The Six Point Programme

- On 5 February 1966, five months after the Indo-Pakistan War of 1965, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in a convention in Lahore explained this programme, which he qualified as the “Blueprint for Bengali Right to live”. The proposal was rejected rightaway by the majority delegates. Immediately he came back with Tajuddin Ahmed to the province from west, and started country-wide campaign for realizing the demand. There was unprecedented public backing in support of the 6-points.

The Six Point Programme

- The constitution should provide for federal parliamentary form of Government based on adult franchise.
- The federal government shall deal only with two subjects; defense and foreign affairs. All residuary subjects will be vested in the federating states.
- There should be either two separate, freely convertible currencies for the two wings, or one currency with two separate reserve banks to prevent inter-wing flight of capital.

The Six Point Programme

- The power of taxation and revenue collection shall be vested in the federating units. The federal government will receive a share to meet its financial obligations.
- Economic disparities between the two wings shall disappear through a series of economic, fiscal and legal reforms. Federating units should maintain separate foreign exchange accounts and conduct foreign trade and foreign aid separately.
- A military or paramilitary force must be created in East Pakistan, which at present has no defense of its own.

Agartala Conspiracy

A case framed by the Pakistan Government in 1968 during the Ayub regime against Awami league leader Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, some in-service and ex-service army personnel and high government officials.

They were accused of involvement in conspiracy to separate the east wing from Pakistan with the help of the Government of India.

It was said that the conspiracy was formulated between the Indian Party and the accused persons at Agartala city of Tripura in India. The case was thus called Agartala Conspiracy Case.

Agartala Conspiracy

- However the Pakistan government was compelled to withdraw the case on 22nd February in 1969 in the face of a mass movement. On 23rd February a grand public reception was accorded to the accused at Paltan Maidan in Dhaka where Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was vested with the appellation (name) of Bangabandhu.
- The Sarbadalya Chatra Sangram Parishad supported by Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhasani was organized a mass movement against this case and demanded release of all prisoners.

Mass Upsurge

- In 1969, a 'Student Action Committee' was formed jointly by East Pakistan Chatra League and East Pakistan Chatra Union.
- They announced 11 point demands as a part of a movement against Ayub Khan's regime which incorporated demands of Six points and relevant demands of the middle class, peasants and laborers.
- Anti Ayub meetings processions and gatherings became a part of everyday life.

Mass Upsurge

- The government failed to contain the movement. When student leader M Asaduzzaman died due to police firing, the situation went beyond the control of the regime and the movement assumed the form of a mass upsurge.
- 100 East Pakistanis were killed in the movement.
- More importantly movement reached its peak when Proctor of Rajshahi University Dr. Shamsuzzoha was killed by a bullet fired by the military.

Mass Upsurge

- The mass movement compelled Ayub Khan to withdraw the Agortala Conspiracy.
- At that situation Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was freed from the jail
- Ayub Khan handed over his power to the Chief of Army Md. Yahia Khan on March 24, 1969 and Yahya Khan imposed Martial Law in the country on 25 March. Sheikh Mujib was accorded a reception at Racecourse Maidan attended by around 5 lakh people where he was given the title of 'Bangabandhu'.

Election of 1970

- Yahia Khan declared in 1969 that elections of the National and Provincial Assembly would be held on October, 1970.
- Under the legal framework order, the number of seats in the National Assembly was fixed at 313(13 women seats), out of these share of East Pakistan was 169 (7 women) and 144 for West Pakistan.

Election of 1970

- The Pakistan People's Party (PPP) won 88 out of 144 National Assembly seats in West Pakistan, and Awami League won 167 out of 169 National seats in East Pakistan.
- The Awami League failed to win any seat in West Pakistan while PPP failed to win any seat in East Pakistan.

Election of 1970

- Again the number of seats in the Provincial Assembly of East Pakistan was 300.
- In the election for East Pakistan Provincial Assembly, the Awami League won 288 out of 300 seats.

Election of 1970

- Amid the furore, Yahya Khan announced that the session of the National Assembly would be commenced in Dhaka on 3 March, 1971 for the purpose of framing the constitution. Later he cancelled the date and re-fix it on 25 March.
- The people of East part erupted in anger after this re-fixation of date and Sheikh Mujibur Rahman called 2 days hartal. First one was observed in Dhaka, second in the whole province.

- Yahya Khan arrived in Dhaka on 15 March for talks and continued it till 24 March. Bhutto arrived in Dhaka on 21 March to join the talks.
- Yahya Khan was in fact killing time in the name of talks; meanwhile, he was bringing in military equipment and soldiers from West Pakistan.
- At last, the Pakistani army carried out a genocide in Dhaka on the night of 25 March. In protest against these brutal killings, the liberation war of Bangladesh was started on 26 March 1971 and continued for 9 months. East Pakistan got its rightful independence as Bangladesh.

Liberation War 1971