



“THE SEED OF INDEPENDENCE OF BANGLADESH LIED IN THE SIX-POINT PROGRAM”

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Abstract : This paper will define the role of Bengali political leadership to convert the dream of separation of East Pakistan into reality. It will also provide a systematic study of Six Point Programme which proved to be a 'charter of independence' and gave a extensive analysis of the basic demands of East Pakistanis and successfully combined public opinions in order to get mass support in the struggle for freedom from the West Pakistan. Moreover, this study will seek several waves of criticism regarding Six Point Programme by the state of Pakistan and political parties of West Pakistan. After reading the paper thoroughly, people will gain almost all the story of the six point movement.

Introduction: The six-point movement was a movement in East Pakistan, which called for greater autonomy for East Pakistan. The historic Six-Point Demand or the Six-Point Formula has been widely credited as the "charter of freedom" in Bangladesh's struggle for self-determination from Pakistan's domination. The movement's main agenda was to realize the six demands put forward by a coalition of Bengali nationalist political parties in 1966, to end the perceived exploitation of East Pakistan by the West Pakistani rulers. It is considered a milestone on the road to Bangladesh's independence.

Objective: the Six-Point was the seeds of the struggle for independence. Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had declared the Six-Point to prepare the whole nation and stimulate the thoughts of the people desirous of achieving the independence of the country. The Six-Point demand is an integral part of the country's history and it had significant role to the struggle for independence. It changed into a sworn statement to call for equity and justice towards the gigantic exploitation of Bengalis

concerning political, administrative, economic and defence related rights by using the West Pakistanis for 18 years.

Background: The six-point movement is one of the milestone in the history of our struggle for independence. It was the turning point in Bangladesh's search for independence. On February 6, 1966, leaders in West Pakistan called for a national conference. On February 4, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman reached Lahore to attend the conference. The next day on February 5, he placed six points before the meeting of subject committee and urged to include the issue in the agenda of next day conference. The proposal was rejected and Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was identified as separatist. On February 6, Bangabandhu boycotted the conference. On February 21, six points proposal was placed before the meeting of the working committee of Awami League and the proposal was accepted unanimously. Because The reason for proposing six points was to end Master-slave rule in Pakistan. East Pakistan was facing a critical situation after being subjected to continuous discrimination on a regional basis, year after year. As a result, the economists, intelligentsia, and the politicians of East Pakistan started to raise questions about this discrimination, giving rise to the historic six-point movement. After that, on May 8, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was arrested under the Defence of Pakistan Rules after addressing a rally of jute mill workers in Narayanganj. On June 7, 1966, in the then East Pakistan, a special protest day was observed in support of the Six Point Movement. The government of General Ayub Khan moved to suppress it with force. Police opened fire on demonstrators during the strike, killing several workers in Dhaka, Narayanganj and Tongi. Huge demonstrations were fired upon by police claiming a number of lives. Large scale arrests followed.



The six points are:

- The Constitution should provide for a Federation of Pakistan in its true sense based on the Lahore Resolution, and the parliamentary form of government with supremacy of a Legislature directly elected on the basis of universal adult franchise.
- The federal government should deal with only two subjects: Defence and Foreign Affairs, and all other residual subjects should be vested in the federating states.
- 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.
- The power of taxation and revenue collection should be vested in the federating units and the federal centre would have no such power. The federation would be entitled to a share in the state taxes to meet its expenditures.
- 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.
- East Pakistan should have a separate military or paramilitary force, and Navy headquarters should be in East Pakistan.



In the first article of six points, Bangabandhu urged for a federal system of government based on Lahore Resolution and drew attention for Parliamentary form of government. In the second article, he pointed out that the federal government should deal with only defense and foreign affairs, and all other economic and residual issues should be vested in federating states. With this article, he tried to take over all the administrative power of East Pakistan by the Bengali. The most significant article number three put emphasis on economic emancipation and proposed to end the capital flight from East Pakistan to West Pakistan. Hence, he stressed for freely convertible currencies for two wings or constitutional provisions for prohibiting capital flight. Furthermore, he also proposed to introduce a separate Banking reserve for East Pakistan and to adopt a separate fiscal and monetary policy for East Pakistan so that the demand for economic development and industrialization could address. He stressed that every province has its right to become self-dependent and pointed out the necessity for ensuring credit disbursement and development support for enhancing industrialization of East Pakistan. Article number three has differentiated the six articles from the Lahore Resolution spearheaded by Abul Kasem Fazlul Huq as in the six-point, industrialization and securing export earnings from domestic sources get emphasis.

Moreover, in article number four, he emphasized the power of taxation and revenue collection should be vested in the federating units and the federal center would have no control over it. The policy in turn prepares a background for adopting an investment-friendly-environment and for proper use of revenue for development of East Pakistan. To safeguard the export

earnings of East Pakistan, in article five, he proposed to introduce two separate accounts for the foreign exchange earnings for the East and the West. And, foreign exchange requirement for Federal Government should be met and the ratio of the East and the West for using the foreign reserve becomes fixed. For promoting domestic industrialization, he proposed to free movement of the indigenous products between the two wings. And for having the right of import and export by the industrialist of East Pakistan, he stressed that the constitution should empower the two units of Pakistan to establish trade links with foreign countries. And finally, the article number six is about the separate defense system for East Pakistan.

Analysis:

Since the partition of India and Pakistan, there has been inequality between the east and west Pakistan in all aspects. The inhabitants of East Pakistan made up the majority of its population, and exports from East Pakistan were a majority of Pakistan's export income.

However, East Pakistanis did not feel they had a proportional share of political power and economic benefits within West Pakistan. Where 63% of populations lived in East Pakistan and 36.23% populations lived in West Pakistan, though since 1950-1970, the budgetary allocations were larger in the West Pakistan, depriving the East Pakistan. A statistical overview of economic discrimination is shown in this table:

Year	Spending on West Pakistan (in crores)	Amount spent on West as percent age of total	Spending on East Pakistan (in crore rupees)	Amount spent on East as percent age of total
% of total population		36.23		63.77
1950-	1,129	68.31	524	31.69

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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
<i>Source: Reports of the Advisory Panels for the Fourth Five Year Plan 1970-75, Vol. I, published by the planning commission of Pakistan (quick reference: crore = 10⁷, or 10 million)</i>				

During the Indo-Pak war in 1965, the people of East Bengal or East Pakistan remained totally unprotected as there was no importance to the central government of Pakistan for protecting this region and East Bengal was left at the mercy of India. If India could have launched a massive attack on East Bengal then it would have not been possible for Pakistan to save this region staying at a distance of 1,200 miles. On the other hand, if we review the war scenario of that time, then we see India could occupy up to Lahore of Pakistan had not the Bengali soldiers of Bengal Regiment faced the Indian military attack with bravery.

Any strong base of Army, Air Force and Navy was never set up in East Pakistan, while the 14 Division headquarter of Pakistan Army was in a very fragile state. The presence of Bengalees in the Pakistan Military was very limited. A report of Pakistani newspaper the Dawn in 1956 highlighted the position of Bengales as follows:

Rank	West Pakistan	East Bengal
General	3	0

Major General	20	0
Brigadier	34	0
Colonel	49	1 (non spoken Bengali)
Lt Colonel	198	2
Major	590	10
Naval Officer	593	7
Air Force Officer	640	40

This indicates that there was only two Bengalee officers going up to their highest Lt Colonel rank, but during the war, it was the Bengali soldiers who fought with utmost bravery. So at that time such a movement was absolutely necessary for the bengalees.

On the contrary, The six-point movement had also far reaching effects on the subsequent political developments in the then Pakistan. As noted by Dr. M. Rashiduzzaman: "The entire weight of the party (the Awami League) was thrown in favour of the anti-Ayub movement, which spread throughout the country in the early months of 1969, and it is likely that the Awami League will play an even more active role in the future (M. Rashiduzzaman, The Awami League in the Political Development of Pakistan, Asian Survey, Vol. 10, No. 7, July, 1970; pp. 574-587)." About the impact of the six-point program on the 11-point charter of the 1969 student-mass movement, Dr. Rashiduzzaman observed: "For all practical purposes, the eleven-point student program was an expanded version of the Awami League's six- point demand for autonomy." Eventually Bangladesh achieve many thing from the pace of six point movement. So it is the part of a history that will never be forgotten.

Concluding reflections:

Analyzing the six-point spearheaded by Bangabandhu, we become assured that the movement was an integrated approach of national freedom and contributed to preparing the backbone of present consistent economic growth. Since 1966, to the general election of December 1970, the political movement in East Pakistan becomes dependent on the Six-Point program. It becomes so popular in a short while and turned into a charter of Freedom for Bengali.

Suggestions: The significance of six-points stands as a symbol of economic freedom of Bangladesh with the expectation of becoming self-reliant and achieving long-cherished dream of turning Bangladesh into

Sonar Bangla. Our ancestors guaranteed our economic liberation. Now we have to work to turn our Bangla into sonar Bangla. We have to fulfill the unfinished dream of our ancestors. At the same time, we expect structural reform from government to secure the goal of Sonar Bangla.

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