

## **The Liberation War of Bangladesh: Emergence of Nationalism in the Political Context**



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**ABSTRACT:** The age of the Bengali liberation war has crossed almost five decades. The political, social, economic, and cultural background of the liberation war of 1971 and the emergence of independent Bangladesh is huge and varied in the form of canvas. So, this current study titled "The Liberation War of Bangladesh: Emergence of Nationalism in the Political Context" aims to investigate in what context have the common people, including military, paramilitary, political, administrative and business people, come together at the same point to demand independence? Following that, the study deals with the great liberation struggle of the Bengali nation, and significant facts, events, situations, changes in the political landscape of the time, the background of the establishment of Pakistan, linguistic, tradition, culture, and conflicting differences between East and West Pakistan from 1947 to 1971. The development of Bengali nationalism is also documented in this study by highlighting inequality in different sectors by using various data and statistics. The study is mainly used secondary data to accomplish the article. For instance, books, interviews, newspapers, various researches, online liberation war documents, etc. were used as references in the described research.

**KEYWORDS-** Liberation; War; Nationalism; Political Context; Bangladesh

### **I. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

To evaluate the cultural interrelationships of Bengali nationalism, one needs to know about the history of the people of Bangladesh. To gain political recognition, Bengali Muslims needed a spatial basis of national identity. Initially, this foundation was thought to consist of Bengal and Assam. Before the partition of India, Muslims were the majority here. This was assumed in the 1946 Cabinet Mission Plan prepared by the then ruling British government as the basis of India's independence. The plan called for the transfer of power to the three sub-states of the north-west, central and north-east India and for the center to be given as little power as possible in defense, foreign affairs, national communications, and some economic matters.

The cabinet mission plan was rejected by the Indian National Congress and a consensus was reached on the partition of India based on a proposal to establish a Pakistani state with Muslim-majority areas. In this situation, Muslim Bengali nationalism redefined its past boundaries. The idea of joining Pakistan was accepted when the Congress High Command rejected the idea of a united and sovereign Bengal. The expression of Bengali nationalism in the Pakistan movement eventually had to assert its national identity as a definite majority community in the vicinity of East Bengal and Sylhet within the boundaries redefined by Radcliffe. Bengali nationalism has to be accepted within these boundaries. Whatever, after 14 August 1947 the origin of Bengali nationalism came to be known only as the nationalism of the then East Pakistan and the whole of present-day Bangladesh. Non-Muslims are also included in this definition of nationalism (Sobhan, 2017).

### **II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The events of history prove that the people of East Pakistan were gradually prepared for independence from the first day of March 1971, inspired by the nationalist spirit from 1952, 1962, 1969, and 1970. But in present days, many of those who have heard of the history of Bangladesh that was formed based on the War of Liberation is imaginary or partially true. Partial true history is sometimes worse than false. The young generation, therefore, knows the history of the Liberation War from their textbooks and legends, which are often covered with biases or lies. It is rare to have a neutral history about the boundless sacrifice that brought freedom. This study tries to give an accurate picture of the context in which people of all classes took part in the liberation war.

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### **III. OBJECTIVES**

History vows to seek truth in its own right. That is the beauty of history. In addition to the steps of truth-seeking, the main goal and objective of this study are to find out the real causes behind the emergence of nationalism among Bengali peoples in the liberation war of Bangladesh and how this nationalist movement helped to achieve an independent Bangladesh.

### **IV. RESEARCH QUESTION**

In line with the statement of the problems, the study aims to discuss the following research questions.

- a. What are the major causes behind the emergence of nationalism among Bengali peoples in the context of the liberation war of Bangladesh?
- b. How did this nationalist movement help them to achieve an independent Bangladesh?

### **V. METHODOLOGY**

Research methods are a general process of revealing information and reaching the right conclusions. The first step in this process is to collect information, verify the information while maintaining a neutral point of view, and logically coordinate and insert the information obtained. The conventional Research Method of History has been used in this research. Through which it is possible to reach specific goals. Where mainly secondary data i.e. books, interviews, newspapers, various researches, online liberation war documents, etc. have been used to accomplish the study.

### **VI. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

#### **A. Emergence of nationalism**

The people of the Indian subcontinent have carried out movements in every chapter of the period demanding autonomy in the geopolitical structure of the region. A new national awakening began in Bengal in the nineteenth century to liberate it from British rule. This awakening was characterized by a sense of nationalism and the emergence of political consciousness. We can define nationalism as a sense of national identity of a particular people living in a geographically limited place. Indigenous peoples must be completely separate from their other communities in terms of thought, prosperity, group activities, cultural interactions, protection of their land, etc. If they are neglected or persecuted, then the expression of their needs leads to the full development of nationalism (Levy, 1973). There may also be inconsistencies between the territories of geography, which may divide village by village, district by district, or province by province. Based on the receipt or non-receipt of some basic needs, that is the deprivation of the idea that a nation can or does not have the power to control commodities, government jobs, productive resources, means of production, policy-making, and, distribution process compared to another nation (Sobhan, 2017).

Apart from religious unity, there was no similarity between the people of the two regions of Pakistan. The people of East Bengal were different from the Pakistanis in ethnography, history, tradition, culture, and overall way of life. There were stark differences in the geographical environment, weather, food habits, attitudes, etc. of both parts of Pakistan. Therefore, its journey started with inconsistency at the beginning of the creation of Pakistan. Karachi was made the capital of the new state of Pakistan. However, considering the support of the majority of the people, Dhaka was supposed to be the capital. After the establishment of Pakistan, the path of the new state began with the development of the whole country, the establishment of a democratic political structure, and the assurance of the participation of the two provinces at all levels. Following this path, Pakistani leaders, wearing Islamic masks, often try to hold on to power by talking about Islam and the Muslim Brotherhood. Mainly due to the lack of modern lifestyle, bigotry, and medieval thinking prevailing among the Muslim League leaders, they failed to provide the right direction to the new state.

#### **B. The emergence of nationalism in the political context**

Soon after the birth of Pakistan, the Bengalis were also deprived of state power in Pakistan. In the twenty-three years from 1947 to 1970, only one person from East Pakistan (1947-51) was elected President of Pakistan. After the death of Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the first Governor-General of Pakistan in 1947, Nazimuddin from East Pakistan became the Governor-General of Pakistan. Although Muhammad Ali Jinnah enjoyed all the power of the country as the Governor-General, Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan continued to exercise the real power of the country during the reign of Khawaja Nazim Uddin. After the assassination of Liaquat Ali Khan in 1951 when Khawaja Nazim Uddin became the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Governor-General Ghulam Mohammad (Punjabi) became the ruler of all powers. Therefore, it is seen that East Pakistani Khawaja Nazim Uddin did not get the real power as the Governor-General, nor did he get the real power as the Prime Minister. It was a conspiracy not to give power to any East Pakistani (even if he is a non-Bengali East Pakistani). From 1947 to 1958, there were six prime ministers of Pakistan. Four of them were West Pakistanis. Of the three who became the Prime Minister of Pakistan from East Pakistan, only Hussain Shahid Suhrawardy was aware of the interests of the Bengalis. The other two (Khawaja Nazim Uddin and Mohammad Ali of Bogra) have given importance to the interests of West Pakistanis (Mamun & Rahman, 2019).

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Khawaja Nazim Uddin formed the first cabinet of East Bengal on 14 August 1947. A review of this cabinet shows that no member of the Suhrawardy cabinet before 14 August was included in the first cabinet of independent East Bengal. Naturally, with the birth of a new state, there is a lack of consensus among the political leaders. As a result, new political parties and organizations developed in the country. The whole country is floating in the tide of movement (Ahmed, 1992).

At the time of independence on 14 August 1947, the activities of the political parties in East Bengal were: Muslim League, National Congress, Communist Party, etc. AK FazlulHuq's Krishak-Praja Party had a nominal existence. Before independence, the Bengal Provincial Muslim League was in power in the united Bengal.

The Awami League was formed in West Pakistan in May 1949 under the leadership of Pir of Manki Sharif and on 23 June 1949 the Awami Muslim League was formed in East Bengal under the leadership of Maulana Bhashani. The newly formed party aimed to turn Pakistan into a democratic state and bring about social and economic reforms in the country (Mamun & Rahman, 2019).

### C. Language movement

The historical language movement started a new chapter in the history of the Bengali liberation war. The influence of the language movement in our liberation war is undeniable. The attack on the Bengali language by the Pakistani ruler and the Muslim League clique was mainly an attack on the abhorrent tradition, culture, history, and identity of the Bengali nation. To resist this blow to this culture and tradition, the Bengali nation created a bloody political chapter. Conspiracies against the Bengali language began on the pretext of religion. Bengali language and Bengali culture are not compatible with Islam - hostility originates mainly from this base attitude and reasoning. Islamization of Bengali language, intrusion of Arabic and Persian words by abolishing Sanskrit and original Bengali words, abolition of original Bengali alphabet, dismantling of the institutional structure of Bengali language and literature and practice were the main objectives (Ahmed, et al., 2004). There was a good reason behind the demand of the Bengali language movement in East Bengal to make Bangla one of the state languages. Bengali was the mother tongue of 56% of the people of Pakistan. Apart from the mother tongue, it was less likely to be educated in another language and to do well in that language. The participation of Bengalis in the administration, army, and economic sector of Pakistan was negligible. On top of that, if Urdu was made the official language, the chances of Bengalis being included in the central administration would have been lessened due to language problems. As a result, in all cases, the Urdu-speaking people would get priority and gradually consume the Bengalis and establish their monopoly. Which means 'watery grave' of Bengali entity. Thus, the Bengali educated community was forced to protest strongly against the decision to make Urdu the only official language. Their protest gradually took the form of a political movement against West Pakistani political hegemony and economic exploitation (Rahman, 2017). The linguistic position of the people after the establishment of Pakistan in 1947 was as follows:

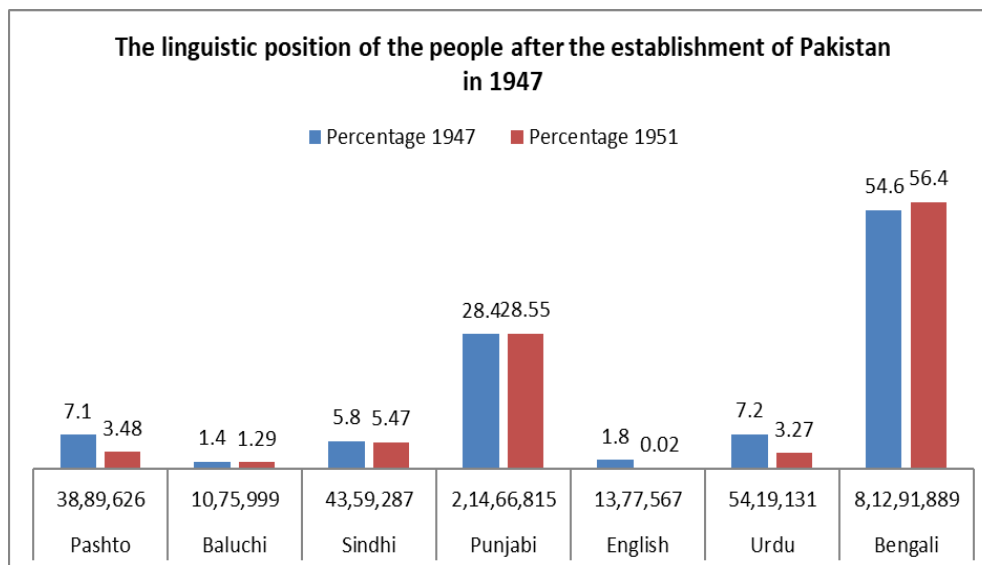


Figure 1. The linguistic position of the people after the establishment of Pakistan in 1947

Note. Prepared by authors based on Rahman, "Bangladesher Itihas: 1947-1971," p-93.

Only 7.2% of people speak Urdu while 54.6% of people speak Bengali. Although Urdu was the mother tongue of only 3.26% of the population of Pakistan, attempts were made to make Urdu the official language of Pakistan immediately after independence. Only English and Urdu were used in Pakistani currency, stamps, money order forms, train tickets, etc. Bengali was dropped from the Pakistan Public Service Commission's subject list and in the recruitment examinations of the Navy and other departments.

When the session of the Pakistan Constituent Assembly began on 23 February 1948, Congress party member Dhirendranath Datta proposed an amendment to make Bengali the official language of the Constituent Assembly along with English and Urdu. His proposal was discussed on 25 February.

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He argued that he did not propose this with the attitude of provincialism. Since Bengali is the mother tongue of the majority of the people of Pakistan, the language of the majority should be the state language of Pakistan (Rahman, 2017).

On 2 September 1947, a group of students and teachers of Dhaka University formed the cultural association 'TamaddunMajlish'. A pamphlet titled 'Bangla or Urdu, the State Language of Pakistan', published on 15 September 1947, called for making Bengali the medium of instruction and the language of the courts of law in East Pakistan (Ahmed, et al., 2004).

Since the birth of Pakistan, the political activities of the students have played a major role in the political movement of this country. The students who fought for the establishment of Pakistan again started a movement against the Muslim League government at the beginning of the creation of Pakistan. When the opposition parties became inactive due to the repressive policies of the government during the rule of different governments, the university students played a major role in opposing the government (Khabiruzzaman, 2011).

Realizing the need for an organization to activate the struggle for the Bengali language, the 'RashtrabhashaSangram Parishad' was formed on 2 March 1947 at FazlulHaque Hall in Dhaka. The council consists of two representatives from each of the following organizations, namely TamaddunMajlish, GanaAzadi League, Ganatantrik Juba League, Salimullah Muslim Hall, FazlulHaque Muslim Hall and other dormitories, and East Pakistan Muslim ChhatraLeague. The student organization of the communist party called the Student Federation was also included. Shamsul Alam was nominated as the convener of the council (Rahman, 2017).

When Jinnah arrived in Dhaka on 19 March 1948, a civic reception was organized in his honor at the Race Course Maidan (now Suhrawardy Udyan) on 21 March. But at the meeting, he announced his proud decision on the state language, saying, "But I need to make it clear to you that the state language of Pakistan will be Urdu, not any other language. If anyone tries to mislead you, you must understand that he is the enemy of the state."

Then on the morning of March 24, a special convocation ceremony was held at Dhaka University in honor of Jinnah. When Jinnah again declared that 'Urdu will be the only state language', then a large number of students protested with shouting 'no' 'no', Jinnah paused for a moment and then explained the matter in a softer tone. Instead, expressing a personal opinion, he said, 'I think Urdu can be the only language (Hannan, 2014).'

Thus, in the first half of March 1948, the language movement spread throughout the country. 'I want Bangla as the state language' - this slogan continues to touch the remote areas of the country. Against the backdrop of the intensification of the language movement, the Chief Minister of East Bengal, KhawajaNazim Uddin, proposed a compromise with the 'RashtrabhashaSangram Parishad'. In this context, on 15 March 1948, the '6-point' agreement was signed between the 'RashtrabhashaSangram Parishad' and Chief Minister Khawaja Nazim Uddin (Ahmed, et al., 2004).

Although the movement of the first episode stopped, the language movement did not stop. After a temporary stagnation, the movement began to take shape again. At this time the Pakistani ruling class started a conspiracy with the bizarre plan of reforming the Bengali alphabet, writing Bengali in Arabic script, etc. Pakistan's Education Minister Fazlur Rahman was at the forefront of this work. A protest procession was held in Dhaka on 11 March 1949 to commemorate the previous year's protest day. Then a student gathering was held on 11 March 1950 at the premises of Dhaka University and 'RashtrabhashaSangram Parishad' was formed here (Ahmed, et al., 2004).

Then at the end of January 1952, the language movement was revived in a statement of Khawaja Nazim Uddin. Coming on a visit to East Bengal as the Prime Minister on 26 January 1952, he made a similar announcement to Muhammad Ali Jinnah that, "Urdu will be the only state language of Pakistan."

His announcement provoked an immediate reaction from students, teachers, and intellectuals. In protest of Khawaja Nazim Uddin's statement, 'RashtrabhashaSangram Parishad' called a student strike and meeting on 30 January 1952 at Dhaka University. At the meeting of 30 January, it was decided to hold a student strike, demonstration procession, and student meeting in Dhaka city on 4 February 1952. An all-party meeting was held in the afternoon of January 31 at the Bar Library in Dhaka under the chairmanship of MaulanaAbdul Hamid Khan Bhashani, President of the East Pakistan Awami Muslim League, to expand the language movement. A 40-member 'All-Party State Language Struggle Council' was formed at the meeting comprising representatives of East Pakistan Muslim Chhatra League, TamaddunMajlish, Islamic Brotherhood, Youth Union, East Pakistan Muslim Awami League, and other organizations. The council supported the program on 4 February and on 21 February announced a program of strikes, demonstrations, and rallies throughout East Pakistan. A session of the East Bengal Provincial Council was convened on 21 February. The purpose of the program on 21 February was to put pressure on the Central Government on behalf of East Pakistan to decide to make Bengali one of the state languages in that session. The provincial government has shown a strict attitude towards the program of the All-Party State Language Struggle Council. On 12 February, the English-language daily Pakistan Observer, a supporter of the language movement, was banned, and section 144 was issued in everywhere Dhaka for a month from the night of 20 February. The issuance of section 144 means that it is against the law for a gathering, procession, procession, meeting, and assembly of more than four people at a time (Rahman, 2017).

On 21 February, the students gathered at the university premises and decided to violate Section 144 issued by the government. GaziulHaque announced the decision to violate Section 144 at a meeting of Dhaka University at Battala that morning. Salam, Barkat, Rafiq, Jabbar, and others were martyred when the police fired indiscriminately on the students' procession. Many were

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injured, many were taken as a prisoner (Ahmed, et al., 2004). Later the inquiry committee reported that there was no other way to stop the agitated student crowd except through gunfire. So the firing by the police was necessary and logical (Hannan, 2014).

At this time the session of the East Bengal Management Council was going on. MaulanaAbdur Rashid Tarkabagish, Khairat Hossain, AnwaraKhatun, AbulKalamShamsuddin, and other members walked out of the session room in protest against the indiscriminate firing on the students. A hartal was spontaneously observed in Dhaka city on 22 February. Seeing no change, the government summoned the army and imposed a curfew (Ahmed, et al., 2004).

Finally, in the constitution of Pakistan in 1956, Bengali was recognized as one of the state languages of Pakistan. The 'ShahidMinar' was built on the night of February 23 by the initiative of the students of Dhaka Medical College (Ahmed, et al., 2004).

### D. 1954 election

After the success of the 1952 movement and the victory of the Democratic United Front (Chhatra League and Chhatra Union) council in the Dhaka University Central Students' Union (DUCSU) elections in 1953, the strong desire to defeat dictatorship and reaction in the larger political arena began to awaken in the democratic and progressive circles. With the forthcoming elections in 1954, this aspiration began to take root. The historic decision to join the United Front was taken at the Council of the Muslim League held on 14 November 1953 (Hannan, 2014).

The general election of 1954 and the formation of the United Front is an important chapter in the history of the liberation struggle of East Bengal. The members elected in 1947 continued to serve as members of the East Bengal Executive Council after the establishment of Pakistan on 14 August 1947. The term of these elected members expired in 1951. But the Pakistani government postponed the elections in East Bengal on various pretexts. Finally, March 8, 1954, was set as the date for the East Bengal Provincial Council elections. The Muslim League took a multi-pronged approach to win this election and carried out extensive electoral activities. The United Front was formed to confront the Muslim League in the elections. In a meeting held between MaulanaBhashani and FazlulHuq in the first week of December 1953, it was decided to form a united front. President of Pakistan Awami Muslim League Hossain Shaheed Suhrawardy played a leading role in the formation of this front. Apart from East Pakistan Awami Muslim League and KrishakSramik Party, Ganatantri Dal and Nezame Islam Party also took part in this anti-Muslim League process. The most important aspect of the United Front elections of 1954 was the presentation of the 'Twenty-One Point' program by the Front to the people of East Bengal.

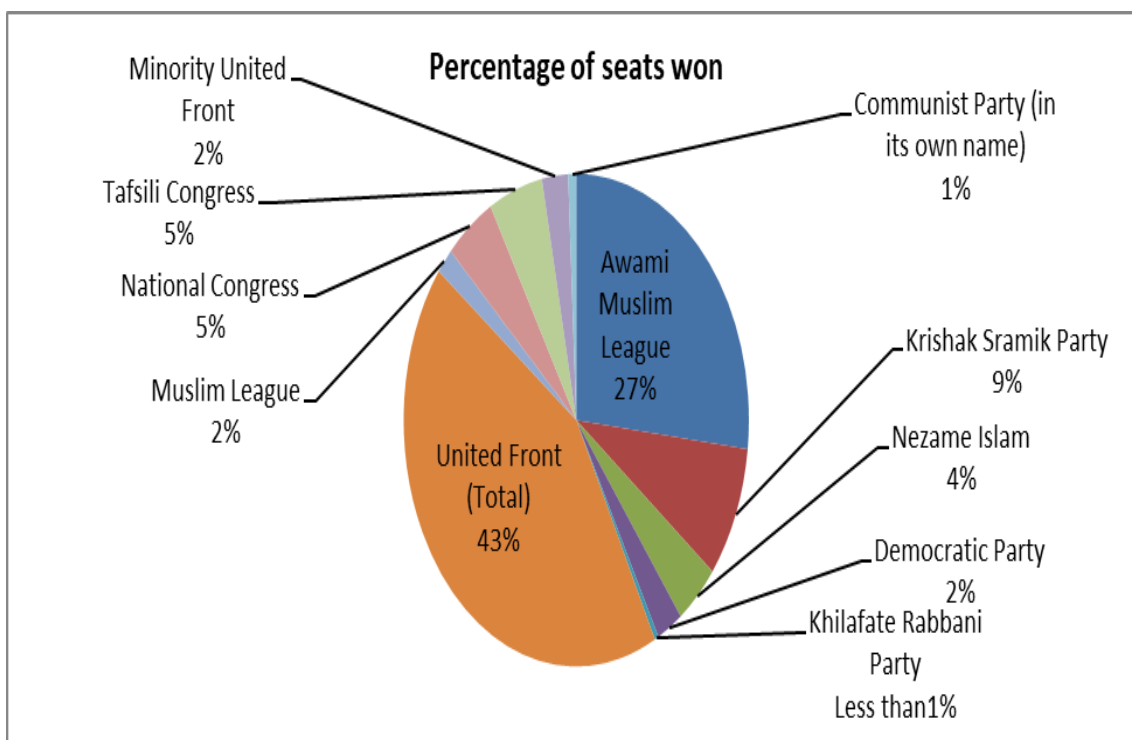
This 'twenty-one point' program was finalized at the special council session of the Awami Muslim League held on 11 December 1953 in Mymensingh. The United Front started its election campaign based on the Twenty-One Point (EkushDafa) program with the 'boat' symbol. In the United Front elections, leaders like MaulanaBhashani, Hossain Shaheed Suhrawardy, AK FazlulHuq, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman visited villages all over Bengal and made the people aware of the issue of 'twenty-one point' demand. The Muslim League used all its strength to win this election. The results of the elections show how much support the people of Bengal had for this 'twenty-one point' demand (Hossain, 2016).

**Table 1.** The number of seats won by the party in the elections held from 8 to 12 March 1954

Participated Party	Number of seats won
Awami Muslim League	143
Krishak Sramik Party	46
Nezame Islam	22
Democratic Party	13
Khilafate Rabbani Party	02
United Front (Total)	228
Muslim League	09
National Congress	25
Tafsili Congress	27
Minority United Front	13
Communist Party (in its name)	04

**Note:** Prepared by authors based on Hannan, "Sadhin Bangladesher Abhyudayer Itihas,"p-97.

The elections were held from 8 to 12 March 1954. The numbers of seats in Parliament were 309. Community based individual selection system was prevalent then. There were 237 Muslim seats and 72 non-Muslim seats. The percentage of seats won by the party in the elections was as follows:



**Figure 2. The percentage of seats won by the party in the elections held from 8 to 12 March 1954**  
**Note: Prepared by authors based on Hossain, “Muktiyuddher Itihas Carca,”p-41.**

Sher-e-Bangla AK FazlulHuq once visited West Bengal as the Chief Minister. At a reception in his honor on April 30, 1954, where he said, “Bengal can be divided for political reasons, but no power can ever divide Bengal's education, culture, and Bengalinness. The Bengalis of the two Bengals will remain Bengalis forever” (Hossain, 2016). When this news was published in the newspapers of Pakistan, there was a negative reaction. In an interview with the New York Times as the Chief Minister, he said, "East Bengal will declare independence if necessary."

Sher-e-Bangla's statement caused an uproar all over Pakistan and all arrangements were immediately made for his ouster by accusing him of treason. The day the Awami League party members were sworn in in the expanded cabinet of the United Front, a horrific Bengali-non-Bengali communal riot broke out among the workers in Adamji in a very well-planned manner. About one and a half thousand workers were killed in the riots. The central government later used the incident as an excuse against the United Front. While this turbulent political situation was going on in East Bengal, Mr. Ghulam Mohammad was the Governor-General of the Central Government of Pakistan, and Mohammad Ali of Bograwas the Prime Minister. When the blueprint for all the conspiracies was finalized, on 30 May 1945, after only 1 month and 27 days in power, the cabinet was dismissed for failing to quell the communal chaos and the rule of the governor was established in East Bengal by promulgating section 131 (92: a). Secretary of Defense Major General Iskander Mirza was appointed Governor of East Bengal (Hossain, 2016).

At 10:30 pm on 7 October 1958, the then President of Pakistan, Major General Iskander Mirza, with the help of the military, overthrew the parliamentary government of Malik Feroz Khan Noon and imposed martial law in Pakistan. He appointed General Muhammad Ayub Khan, the Commander-in-Chief of the Pakistan Armed Forces, as the Chief Martial Law Administrator by a decree dated 7 October. The same decree annulled the 1956 constitution, dismissed the central and provincial governments, dissolved the national and provincial assemblies, dissolved political parties, and stripped them of their basic rights. On 27 October, General Ayub Khan overthrew President Mirza and forced him to flee the country. On 26 October, Ayub Khan issued a government order abolishing the post of Prime Minister and assumed the office of President of Pakistan (Hossain, 2016).

*Declaration of Martial Law*

[Notification No. 977/58 of the Government of Pakistan, dated October 7, 1958. The additional issue of Gazette, October 15, 1958] (Rahman [Volume II], 1982).

As I consider it necessary to exercise jurisdiction within the international borders of Pakistan in pursuit of national needs, I, the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of Pakistan hereby issue such notice.

1. Regulations and decrees of martial law will be published in the most convenient way possible. Violation of the above-mentioned regulations and decrees will result in any person being deemed eligible to enjoy the punishment described in these regulations under martial law.
2. Special provisions may be made in the regulations mentioned for offenses prescribed under general law.

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3. Special courts may be appointed by the said regulations to try and punish the offenses of a violation of the said regulations and decrees and the offenses prescribed under the general law.

### **Muhammad Ayub Khan, HPHJ**

General

Commander-in-Chief and Supreme of Pakistan

The administrator of Martial Law

### **E. General Ayub's rule (Pakistan's first military rule)**

An important stage in East Bengal / Pakistan passed between 1958 and 1966. Earlier, during the military rule, the Rabindra controversy, the student movement, the language and cultural struggle, the communal riots, the Pakistan-India war, and the 'Six Points' movement gradually gave a certain shape to the liberation struggle of the Bengalis. Considering that Pakistan's welfare lies in its empowerment, General Ayub Khan decided to seize power in 1956.

He continued to use the administrative apparatus to convey the benefits of military rule to the people; appointed military officers at every level of administration. He hired government-sponsored writers and journalists to assist in the government's propaganda work. Using all these means, the picture of failure and corruption of the previous government began to emerge. In addition, political parties and politicians were harshly criticized. The political parties that are responsible for the crisis in Pakistan and whose failure has led the country to decline to continue to build public opinion through massive propaganda. As a result of widespread propaganda, the people withdrew their support for military rule from political parties that were good for them. Though leading leaders and activists of political parties and their activists were arrested at the time, no movement was seen to demand their release. So at this time, the country's top leaders such as Maulana Bhashani, Sheikh Mujib, Hamidul Haque Chowdhury, and Abul Mansur Ahmed can be seen in a state of arrest. By dissolving the opposition political parties, the Ayub government took steps to usurp power and pave the way for its return to power. To this end, he ultimately centralized the administration within the next year. He abolished all the powers of the governors of the two provinces in governing and drafting laws. He declared himself the only executive and law-making authority in the country. He first banned political parties so that no one but himself could come to power. The disqualification order was then passed by PODO (Public Official Disqualification Order) and EBDO (Elective Bodies Disqualification Order). He declared himself a field marshal to take himself to another height and presented a new model of democracy to bring the people back to democratic ideology. He called this model 'Basic Democracy'. Some of the features of the President's basic democracy were significant. For instance:

1. The Cabinet and the House of Representatives are subordinate to the President.
2. Abolition of autonomy at the provincial level.
3. The structure of democracy will be in the form of a pyramid, meaning that the president of the country will be at the highest level and the chairman and members of the union council will be at the lowest level.
4. The chairman and members (40,000 + 40,000) will be elected by direct vote of the people.
5. Members elected by direct vote will elect the president.

After the declaration of 'Basic Democracy', the process of implementing this system continued. The President announced the election on 11 January 1960 by direct vote of the people (Khan, 2016).

The people, unable to understand the main issue, enthusiastically elected 80,000 candidates in the two provinces, and on February 14, these 80,000 candidates gave Ayub a five-year term as President. Ayub said the government should be elected and give a gift to the nation in a constitution. The constitution promised was implemented after 2 years and 15 days on March 1, 1962. In this constitution, all the provisions were inserted to protect the principles of its basic democracy and centralized power. In the light of this constitution, elections to the National Assembly were held in April 1962 and to the Provincial Council in May. In the absence of other political parties, only those with government support were elected. The National Assembly convened on 8 June 1962 and on the same day the military rule was lifted and the new constitution was introduced. The term that Ayub Khan wanted to restore democracy in 1958 expired in October 1961 (Khan, 2016).

### **F. Education movement of 1962**

In February 1960, Ayub elected himself president and fulfilled his promise to draft a constitution in 1962. And during this problem, the people were slowly beginning to anticipate the evils of military rule. In October 1962, at the end of three years of Ayub's rule, political parties began secretly trying to organize themselves. After the imposition of martial law, the student parliament scheduled in all the colleges and universities of East Pakistan was canceled. To maintain their existence, the student organizations changed their political names and started conducting activities under the name of cultural organizations. The student union of Dhaka University started its activities under the names of Cultural Parliament, Shilpa Sahitya Sangha of Chhatra League, Chhatra Shakti Sanskriti Parishad, Islami Chhatra Sangha, and Chhatra Majlish Amir Millat. Following this tradition, students and political organizations keep the political practice active under different names. On 30 December 1961, a meeting was held between the central leaders of the Chhatra League and the Chhatra Union on the initiative of Mohammad Farhad, the leader of the Chhatra Union. 30-35 leaders and activists of the two organizations including Mujib, Manik Mia, Mani Singh, and Khoka Roy

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attended the secret meeting. At this meeting, all agreed to form a united movement against military rule in exchange for anything (Roy, 1995). As a prelude to the movement and as a first step, it was decided that Shaheed Suhrawardy would issue a statement from Karachi demanding the repeal of martial law and the restoration of democracy (Hannan, 2014). So when Suhrawardy went to Karachi in January, he was arrested on 30 January 1962 under the Security Act on charges of engaging in "harmful to Pakistan's security" activities (Islam, 1981). On January 31, 1962, students of Dhaka University staged a protest in defiance of martial law. Meetings, processions, and demonstrations have been going on for several days in a row. All this happened when the military ruler Ayub Khan himself was staying in Dhaka. To control the situation, the university authorities declared the university closed for a month and ordered the students to leave the hall. The students became angrier. The students clashed with police during a demonstration on February 6. When the police started torturing and arresting the protesters, the movement spread to Khulna, Barisal, Sylhet, and other parts of the country. The top leaders were imprisoned to diminish this movement (Ahmed, et al., 2004). In this agitated situation, the announcement to implement the new constitution on March 1 made the students even angrier. On March 15, students of Dhaka University went on strike. The students burnt the copy of the constitution on the same day. At this time the student police clashed. The strike continued for 12 consecutive days demanding repeal of the constitution. On 24 June, nine East Pakistani leaders joined the movement and issued a statement. After which Suhrawardy and Bhashani welcomed. The student movement of 1962 reached a new level in September. The implementation of the 'Sharif Education Commission Report' introduced by Ayub Khan started in 1959. The Sharif Commission proposed a new language, a mixture of Bengali and Urdu, to strengthen Pakistan's national unity. This commission introduced the Roman alphabet in the Bangla Academy. Different provinces adopted plans for compulsory education in Bengali and Urdu, including the reform of the Bengali alphabet. Although the students and intellectuals opposed it at that time, they could not make any movement in the policy of suppression of military rule. But when the report was published in 1962, at this stage the students started a new movement called 'Sixty-two Education Movement' focusing on this issue (Rahman, 2017). The language movement of 1952 sowed the seeds of nationalist consciousness among the people. And these seeds of the student movement germinated and sparked progress with the national consciousness. The whole country got the tide of the movement of '62. Although it was the educated middle class and students this movement played an important role in raising the consciousness of the people. The general public also became aware of the tide of student awakening. From this time onwards, the West Pakistan government again raised religious smoke in its political stance. The loss of the beard of Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH) in Kashmir was deliberately blamed on the Hindus and communal riots broke out. The riots started from Khulna, first Hindu-Muslim and later turned into Bengali-Biharis (Ahmed, et al., 2004). The riots had a significant impact on the minds of the people. At this time of political separatism, the Awami League began to be revived by the hand of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. The process of revival of the old Awami League began on 25 January 1964 at a meeting of the Working Committee at the residence of Maulana Abdur Rashid Tarkabagish. The new Awami League put forward several demands including the formulation of a new constitution for the establishment of parliamentary democracy (Ahmed, et al., 2004).

### G. Elections of '65 and the 6-point movement

In the 2 January 1965 presidential election, the combined opposition candidate, Fatima Jinnah, won 47% of the seats in East Pakistan. It must have been a major blow to Ayub in a policy like "Basic Democracy" and in the long 7 years of free elections without political influence (Ahmed, et al., 2004).

Another milestone in the movement in East Pakistan was the Pakistan-India war of 6 September 1965. After 17 days of fighting, East Pakistanis can realize that they are vulnerable. While the East Pakistani soldiers were vigorously defending the city, the Pakistani government did not stockpile even a small number of troops in East Pakistan. During the war, East Pakistan was isolated from the rest of the world, including West Pakistan (Rahman, 2017). There was a price hike in East Pakistan after the war. Immediately after the battle, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman declared, "The question of post-war autonomy seems more important."

This political idea of making East Pakistan self-sufficient in all respects is expressed through the 'Six Points'. On 16 January 1966, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman proposed 'Six Points' in the working committee of the Awami League and it was unanimously adopted. A pamphlet entitled "Six-Point Program" was issued on February 5, 1966, at the All Pakistan Opposition Party Rally and then at the Council Session on March 16 (Trivedi, 2016). The 1966 'Six Points' demands were:

#### **Claim - 1: The constitutional structure and the nature of the state:**

The constitutional structure of the country should be such that Pakistan would be a federation-based United Nations and its basis would be the Lahore resolution. The government will be parliamentary type. The power of the legislature will be sovereign and this council will also be elected by direct popular vote based on universal adult franchise.

#### *Claim 2: Power of central government:*

The powers of the central government will be limited to only two cases. Namely, national defense and foreign policy. In all other subjects, the power of the member states will be absolute.

#### **Claim - 3: Monetary power:**

Concerning currency, one of the following two proposals can be accepted-



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(A) There will be two separate, yet freely exchangeable currencies for the whole country. Or, (B) Under the present rules, only one currency can be in circulation for the whole country. However, in that case, the regime should have effective measures to stop the smuggling of capital from East Pakistan to West Pakistan. In this case, a separate banking reserve and a separate monetary policy should be established for East Pakistan.

*Claim - 4: Power related to revenue, tax, or duties:*

The states of the federation will have sovereign power over the imposition of taxes or duties. The central government will not have the power to impose any tax. However, a portion of the state revenue will go to the central government for meeting the necessary expenditure. The central government's fund will be made up of the same percentage of all taxes collected by the states.

**Claim - 5: Powers of Foreign Trade:**

(A) Separate accounts of foreign trade of each State of the Federation shall be maintained.

(B) Foreign exchange earned through foreign trade will remain under the jurisdiction of the States.

(C) The states will meet the demand for foreign exchange required for the Center at an equal rate or a rate agreed upon by the States.

(D) There shall be no restrictions on the movement of domestic goods between the States.

(E) The Constitution shall give the States the power to send their respective trade representatives abroad and to conclude trade agreements in their interest.

**Claim - 6: Power to form regional armies:**

To maintain regional integration and governance, the constitution must give states the power to form and maintain paramilitary or regional armies under their authority (BD 71, 2014).

### H. Agartala conspiracy case

Against the backdrop of the 1965 war, the historical significance of the 'Six Points' was different from all previous movements in East Pakistan. The program reflected the aspirations of the common people, the middle class, and the upper-middle class. The Awami League began to increase public relations to build public opinion around the 'Six Points'. The first public meeting on 'Six Points' was held in Paltan on 20 March. Sheikh Mujibur was free for 35 days after the declaration of 'Six Points'. During this time he held public meetings in 3 places and formed a massive public opinion. He was then arrested on May 8. Top leaders were also arrested along with Mujib. Although the leaders of the first row were arrested, the 6 points movement reached the village holding the hands of the leaders of the second row. To quell the movement, Ayub Khan arrested 13,000 Awami League leaders and activists. In August, President Ayub said he would adopt a "different approach" if the "six-point" supporters did not stop their activities. In December 1967, a rumor spread in the political arena. And then the government is suddenly going to file a case against the state. Its authenticity was found in early 1968. On January 1 and January 6, the central government of Pakistan issued two press notes. A press note said 28 people were arrested in East Pakistan last month on charges of involvement in an anti-state conspiracy. The conspiracy was uncovered last month.

The captives were trying to isolate East Pakistan. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was made the main accused in the case in a new press note on January 18. The trial of the case began on June 19, 1968. There are 35 accused including Sheikh Mujib in this case (Rahman, 2017). On 19 June 1968, in the presence of many local and foreign journalists, the trial in the case of 'State vs. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and Others', alleging separation of East Pakistan with the help of Indian arms and money, began in Dhaka Cantonment (Mamun & Rahman, 2019).

Immediately after the case was filed, the students of Jagannath College started a movement demanding the release of the prisoners. Due to this, demonstrations started to be celebrated all over the country. The people did not believe the truth of this case. On the contrary, the people began to firmly believe that the ruling class had deliberately filed a false case against the leader who was working to just achieve their demands. Details of the case are published in newspapers every day. As the trial of the case dragged on, the people were getting upset. Students, people, politicians, professionals, peasants, and workers of all walks of life continued to fight for the release of Sheikh Mujib and others. The mass uprising started all over the country. In response to the judicial process in the Agartala case, the student masses tried to organize themselves. On January 4, 1969, the All-Party Student Struggle Council formulated the 'Eleven Points' of this process (Mamun & Rahman, 2019).

These points were political demands. The demands were-

1. Immediate solution to education problems. That is, the Hamidur Rahman Education Commission and the University repeal all the laws and reduce all the monthly fees of students.
2. Restoring parliamentary democracy through direct elections by adult vote and granting freedom of the press and lifting the ban on the publication of the Daily Ittefaq.
3. Establishment of full autonomy in East Pakistan in response to the 'Six Points' demand.
4. Formation of a federal government with autonomy for all the provinces of West Pakistan (i. e. North-West Provinces, Balochistan, Punjab, Sindh).
5. Nationalization of all major industries including banks, insurance, jute mills.

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6. Reduction of taxes and rents from the farmers and fixing the minimum price of jute at Rs. 40.
7. Provide fair wages, medical treatment, education, and housing to the workers and give them rights to the labor movement.
8. Taking measures for flood control and overall utilization of water resources in East Pakistan.
9. Withdrawal of emergency laws, security laws, and other abusive laws.
10. Cancel all Pakistan-US military agreements, including SEATO, CENTRO and adopt a neutral foreign policy outside the alliance.
11. Release arrest warrants from students, workers, farmers, and political activists detained in different jails of the country including the accused in the Agartala case and withdrawal of arrest warrants from others (Khan, 2016).

On January 8, 1969, the political parties formed the Democratic Struggle Council for their united struggle for the realization of the fundamental rights of the people. On May 8, the opposition started working to unite the people in the field with a six-point program.

At this juncture of the country, '11 points' and '6 points' start from the city and reach the villages. People everywhere started chanting slogans against the Ayub regime. At the same time, the demand for the release of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman began to intensify. Many were killed and taken as a prisoner (Choudhury, 1974).

The movement led by the student leaders gained momentum on 20 January 1969. As per the earlier announcement, student leader Asaduzzaman died in front of Dhaka Medical College during a student strike all over Bengal. Assad's death caused a great deal of tension among students and the public. Students protest with Assad's blood-stained shirt. The Student Struggle Council announced a three-day program. It was decided to hold a strike on January 21, a procession and protest rally on January 22, and a torch procession on January 23. It was decided to observe the strike on January 24. On 24 January Dhaka became a battlefield. Students, workers, and employees marched on the streets of Dhaka. The Pakistani government fired on the procession out of fear of mass movement. When a few people were killed in it, the whole administrative system collapsed (Ahmed, et al., 2004). Out of desperation, the government offered to hold talks with East Pakistani leaders. But the leaders did not sit in discussion and announced various programs to continue the movement and demand the release of Sheikh Mujib and others. Dhaka was once again outraged when Sergeant ZahurulHaque was killed on February 15 while he was on trial in the Dhaka Cantonment Agartala case. Just two days after the incident on February 18, the movement of students and people across the country reached its climax when Rajshahi University Professor Zoha was unjustifiably killed by members of the Pakistan Army (Mamun & Rahman, 2019). The mob set fire to the house of Ayub Khan's minister Sabur Khan. Finding no way out, on 22 February 1969, Sheikh Mujib was acquitted of the Agartala case, and the Criminal Law Amendment (Special Tribunal) Ordinance, 1968 was repealed. The release of Sheikh Mujib connected a new feather of success in the student-people movement. The students gave a reception to the released Sheikh Mujib at the Race Course Maidan the next day and conferred on him the title of 'Bangabandhu' at the reception. From then onwards, Sheikh Mujib was considered the main character of any movement in Bengal.

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman firmly grasped the 'Six Points' as a tool of the next political movement, and also supported the students' 'Eleven Points'. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman agreed to hold talks in West Pakistan in Rawalpindi (Ahmed, et al., 2004).

### **I. Election of 1970**

In the face of demands from political parties and the people, the government lifted the ban on political parties and allowed them to campaign; announced the date of the general election on 5 October 1970. However, it was decided to postpone the polls to December 7, 1970, two months after the elections. General Yahya Khan, like the previous military ruler, took another reckless decision; announced the Legal Framework Order (LFO) on March 30 (November 28, '69 in a radio speech) (Rahman, 2017). It empowers the President to declare the Constituent Assembly null and void without ratifying the constitution passed by the elected Constituent Assembly if it is against the unity and Islamic spirit of Pakistan. Political parties have criticized the LFO for opposing the demands of other East Pakistani political groups, including the "Six Points". The East Pakistan Awami League agreed to go to the polls under the LFO just to get the mandate of the people. Bangabandhu's goal was to win the mandate of the people by any means (Salik, 2016). Sheikh Mujibur Rahman left the main election on December 7 and later voted in favor of holding the election in the affected areas. As a result, elections were held in East Pakistan on 7 December 1970 out of 153 seats in the 162 National Assembly constituencies in East Pakistan and 282 out of 300 seats in the Provincial Councils. Elections were held on 17 January 1971 in 9 seats of the National Assembly and 18 seats of the Provincial Assembly. Elections to the National Assembly and Provincial Councils in West Pakistan were held on 7 December 1970, and 17 December 1970, respectively (Ahmed, et al., 2004).

### **J. Results of the 1970 elections**

A total of 24 political parties participated in the election. A total of 1,957 candidates filed nomination papers for 300 seats. Some candidates then withdrew their candidacies. After the selection of nomination papers, 1,579 candidates contested the elections. The Awami League fielded candidates in 170 seats. Of these, 162 seats are in East Pakistan and the rest are in West Pakistan. Jamaat-e-Islami has the second-highest number of candidates. Their number of candidates was 151. The Pakistan People's Party

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fielded candidates in only 120 seats. Of these, 103 were in Punjab and Sindh provinces. They did not field any candidate in East Pakistan.

The PML (Convention) contested in 124 seats, the PML (Council) in 119 seats, and the Pakistan Muslim League (Qayyum) in 133 seats (Rahman, 2017).

The government claims massive turnout and about 65% of the vote. Out of a total of 56,941,500 registered voters, 31,211,220 were from East Pakistan and 23,730,280 were from West Pakistan (Choudhury, 1974).

**Table 2. Results of the 1970 election**

Party	Total Vote Received (%)	Total Seats Won
Awami League	38.3%	160
Pakistan People's Party	19.5%	83
PML (Qayum)	4.5%	9
PML (Convention)	3.3%	7
Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam	4.0%	7
Markazi Jamiat-ulema-Pakistan	4.0%	7
National Awami Party (Wali)	2.3%	6
Jamaat-e-Islami	6.0%	4
PML (Council)	6.0%	2
PDP	2.9%	1
Individual	7.1%	14
<b>Total:</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>300</b>

**Note:** Prepared by authors based on Rahman, Documents of the War of Independence of Bangladesh (Volume II), p-701.

Through elections, the country is divided politically. Yahya did not expect this election result at all. He thought that no political party would get a single majority and that he would remain in office based on a compromise with the majority in West Pakistan. But the majority of the Awami League changed all its calculations. Even then, he came to Dhaka after the election and told reporters that, "he has done his duty. He has given impetus to how the nation will be governed."

This time, Yahya sat down for talks with Sheikh Mujib as the first step in handing over the power. After a successful meeting with Sheikh Mujib on 14 January, he returned to Karachi. At the Karachi airport, he named Sheikh Mujib as the caretaker Prime Minister of Pakistan. Immediately after the election, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, the leader of the Pakistan People's Party, which had a majority in West Pakistan, began campaigning in such a way that the majority in East Pakistan was equal to that of the Awami League and in the West. Although in reality, it is not. He said in Lahore on December 20, 1970, that, "no constitution can be made without his worldly cooperation. The PPP will not sit in the National Assembly as opposition." He also said that "his party got the most of the seats of Punjab and Sindh. So the central government cannot function without the cooperation of his party."

Thus, they did not want to allow the formation of the Awami League government as an absolute majority party (Salik, 2016).

On 15 February, Bhutto dramatically announced that "his party couldn't attend the National Assembly session in Dhaka as there was no possibility of a compromise on the six-point (Khan, 2016)."

On February 28, he added, "if the council convenes without the presence of PPP members, he will start a movement from Khyber to Karachi." He said he will call for a full-scale strike in all four provinces of West Pakistan if elections are held in the reserved seats for women in West Pakistan in the National Assembly without PPP participation."

In Bhutto's announcement, the elected committee postponed the election for 6 women's seats for the time being. Everyone in East Pakistan understands that West Pakistan is no longer willing to hand over the power. The session of the National Assembly to be held on March 3 was adjourned on March 1, proving all possibilities to be false (Hossain, 2019). Bangabandhu joined the agitated crowd in front of Purbani Hotel. At a press conference there, he called for a strike in Dhaka on March 2 and a nationwide strike on March 3 (Rahman, 2017). The unprecedented strike was observed on March 3 at the call of Bangabandhu. In this regard, Anthony Mascarenhas writes, "on 3rd March Mujibur Rahman called a province-wide strike and launched a non-violent non-cooperation movement. Everywhere the people responded to Sheikh Mujib's appeal and the two movements became more orderly and effective. Restoration of order in Dacca was assisted by the withdrawal of troops after it was found they could not enforce the curfew."

Since then the flow of events has been very fast. Several incidents took place on March 5. Many people were killed when the army opened fire on the people in the Tongi industrial area. Students and people in Dhaka erupted in protest.

March 6: General Yahya Khan announces the sitting of the National Assembly on March 25 by radio. On the same day, Tikka Khan was appointed as the Governor of East Pakistan.

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March 7: Bangabandhu outlines the non-cooperation movement in a speech at the Race Course Maidan. From then on, the rule of the country indirectly passed into the hands of the Awami League (Choudhury, 1974).

March 8: 10 guidelines are issued for 1 week. It included guidelines on tax-boycott, strike, closure of educational institutions, and formation of a bank management struggle council.

March 10: Bhashani gives '14 points' in support of Mujib's non-cooperation movement. On the same day, the Chief Justice of the High Court B. A. Siddique refused to read the oath to General Tikka.

March 12: The CSP and ECS Officers' Association fully support the non-cooperation movement and submit their one-day salary to the Awami League's relief fund.

March 14: Civil servants working in the Defense Department protest and march in Dhaka.

March 15: Bangabandhu gives specific instructions for a non-cooperation movement. It had a total of 35 instructions for running the country. Various political parties, student organizations, trade unions, various professional organizations have adopted and followed the instructions of the non-cooperation movement (Ahmed, et al., 2004).

On the same day, the President came to Dhaka for talks to resolve the political unrest. Bhutto was criticized for saying that the question of majority rule was not considered due to the geographical gap between the two constituencies in Pakistan.

March 16: The first episode of Yahya-Mujib begins. After the talks, he invited President Bhutto and Chief Justice Hamidur Rahman to come to Dhaka.

March 17: The two leaders meet again. The meeting of Mujib-Yahya started on 19 March as the discussion was unfinished. On this day 20 Bengalis were martyred when the Joydebpur army opened fire. People protested against it.

March 21: Bhutto with 12/13 delegates in Dhaka faced protests from the Bengali people. Mujib-Yahya met again on the same day. After the meeting, Sheikh Mujib said, "The non-cooperation movement will continue until Bangladesh is liberated." On the same day, Bhashani spoke of an independent Bangladesh.

March 22: Bhutto-Yahya-Mujib meeting begins. This is the first tri-party meeting since the election. After this meeting, everyone became optimistic about a political solution.

March 23: It is decided to observe Pakistan's National Day as a day of resistance in East Pakistan. The student leaders handed over the flag of independent Bengal to Bangabandhu at his residence. On 23 March, the flag of Bangladesh was hoisted everywhere except the cantonment and the governor's building.

March 24: Syed Nazrul Islam, Tajuddin Ahmed, and Dr. Kamal Hossain met with the President's advisers in a two-hour meeting. Dr. Kamal Hossain proposed to name the state 'Confederation of Pakistan'. The day of signing the contract will be fixed on March 25, said Lt. General Pirzada informed everyone. Some members of the West Pakistan Constituent Assembly who had previously visited West Pakistan left East Pakistan on this day.

March 25: After the Bhutto-Yahya meeting, Bhutto told reporters the situation was critical. At three o'clock in the afternoon, the workers' federation and the revolutionary student union organized a public meeting in Paltan (Choudhury, 1974).

President Yahya secretly left Dhaka on the evening of March 25, evading the eyes of the angry crowd. The session of the National Assembly was adjourned on March 25 and at 12 o'clock in the night, innocent people were killed in different places in Dhaka and Chittagong through 'Operation Searchlight (Trivedi, 2016).'

### **K. Pakistani operation and the beginning of the war**

'Operation Searchlight' is a planned genocide carried out by the Pakistani army from March 25, 1971, through which they sought to suppress the Bengali nationalist movement in March 1971 and earlier (Bose, 2005).

#### **1) Planning method**

Major General Khadim Hussain Raja and Major General Rao Farman Ali, GOCs of the 14th Division, formulated the original plan of the operation in early March based on a resolution adopted at a meeting of the Pakistan Armed Forces on February 22, 1971. The division was ordered to make preparations to move to East Pakistan in mid-February (Islam, 1981).

Pakistan's top military official, East Pakistan's GOC Lt. General Sahebzada Yaqub Khan, and the Governor of East Pakistan, Vice Admiral SM Ahsan, were discharged before the operation as they were opposed to military strikes on the people of East Pakistan (Ali, 1996). General Tikka Khan was sent as the Governor and GOC of East Pakistan. On 17 March, General Hamid, the Chief of the Pakistan Army, telephoned and instructed General Raja to plan the operation. On the morning of 18 March, General Raja and Major General Rao Farman Ali sat in the GOC office of Dhaka Cantonment and made plans for the operation. The plan was written by General Farman himself with a lead pencil across 5 pages of a light blue office pad (Khan, 2016).

General Rao Farman Ali set the limits for the decision and conditions of success of the operation, and General Khadim supervised the work of allocating army space, specific responsibilities to various brigades and units (Salik, 2016).

The original operation plan for the genocide was drafted on 18 March. The five-page plan, consisting of 16 handwritten paragraphs, is called Operation Searchlight. It was thought that the Bengali army would revolt at the start of the operation, so the planners, in talks with President Yahya Khan, proposed disarming the Bengali army before the operation and arresting the Bengali political leaders.

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The operation began in the last hours of the night of March 25 in Dhaka and other garrisons were warned by phone call to start their operations at their zero-hours (pre-determined time of operation). Rao Farman Ali was in command of the troops of Dhaka and General Khadem was in command of the troops of all other places. General Tikka and his officers were present to oversee everything in the 31st Command Center and to assist the officers of the 14th Division.

### **2) Results**

The Pakistani troops came out of the cantonment at 11.30 am and launched Operation Searchlight, massacring the Bengalis marching at Farmgate. Then, as planned, they simultaneously attacked Pilkhana and Rajarbagh. Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was arrested at his house at 1.30 pm. Late at night, the then Iqbal Hall, Jagannath Hall, Rokeya Hall, and other residential areas of Dhaka University were attacked and many students including 9 teachers were killed. Under the same plan, old Dhaka, Tejgaon, Indira Road, Mirpur, Mohammadpur, Dhaka Airport, Dhanmondi, Kalabagan, Kathalbagan, etc. were attacked. Many people were killed in the firing of Pakistani troops in Chittagong that night. In addition, Ittefaq, Sangbad, and The People's Office were set on fire for supporting the Bengali liberation movement. Many journalists died in the fire.

On the eve of the genocide on March 25, Pakistani President Yahya Khan left Dhaka for Karachi. But Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, president of the Pakistan People's Party, who arrived for talks with Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, witnessed the raid from the Intercontinental Hotel in Dhaka. On the eve of leaving Dhaka the next day, Bhutto praised the army's work the night before, saying,

"Thank God that Pakistan has been saved." He praised the efforts of military officials, including Yahya Khan.

No actual casualties were reported during the night of March 25 under Operation Searchlight. Foreign journalists were forced to flee the country before the March 25 operation. As there is a strict ban on local newspapers, not much is known about it. The horrors of that night are known from the writings of three foreign journalists, Arnold Zeitlin, Michael Laurent, and Simon Dring, who were hiding at the risk of their lives. Simon Dring's March 30 report in the Daily Telegraph, entitled 'Tanks Crush Revolt in Pakistan', reported the deaths of 200 students at Iqbal Hall, 12 teachers, and their families in the university's residential area. 700 people were burnt to death in old Dhaka. According to various sources from home and abroad, 7,000 Bengalis were killed that night in Dhaka alone (Dring, 1971). KM Raichuddin Khan in his book 'Bangladesh: ItihasPorokkroma' mentions that Pakistani forces killed millions of Bengalis all over Bangladesh on the night of March 25 (Islam, 1981).

### **L. Declaration of independence**

From March 25, all journalists staying at the Hotel Intercontinental in Dhaka were detained by the Pakistani military for two days. From 'Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra' announced that, "Sheikh Mujib has declared seven and a half crore people of East Pakistan as citizens of independent-sovereign Bangladesh (Rahman & Jalal, 2020)."

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman wrote a manifesto at midnight on March 25 or in the early hours of March 26. The manifesto was broadcast on the 26th from 'Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra'. But a limited number of people listened to that broadcast.

Major Ziaur Rahman of the 8th East Bengal Regiment declared independence from Kalurghat in Chittagong on 26 March on behalf of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib. Which is propagated by the international media, so that the world can know about the declaration of independence of Bangladesh. The announcement was as follows:

"I also declare, we have already framed a sovereign, legal Government under Sheikh Mujibur Rahman which pledges to function as per law and the constitution. The new democratic Govt. is committed to a policy of non-alignment in international relations. It will seek friendship with all nations and strive for international peace. I appeal to all Govt. to mobilize public opinion in their respective countries against the brutal genocide in Bangladesh."

The Govt. under Sheikh Mujibur Rahman is the sovereign legal Govt. of Bangladesh and is entitled to recognition from all democratic nations of the world (Rahman [Volume II], 1982).

Mahbubur Rahman Jalal, a freedom fighter living in Texas and a collector of documents related to the liberation war, said, "According to various sources and documents, it is evident that Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman declared the independence of Bangladesh in the early hours of March 26, long before he or anyone else declared it (U.S. Government, 1972)."

When the Mujib-Yahya meeting broke up on March 25, Yahya secretly returned to Islamabad. And after the genocide, the Pakistani army arrested Bangabandhu and five of his loyal fellow that night. Before his arrest, he wrote the declaration of independence of Bangladesh. The translation of the original declaration is as follows:

"This may be my last message, Bangladesh is independent of today. I urge the people of Bangladesh, wherever you are, to continue to resist the occupying army with all your might. Let your war continue till the last Pakistani army is ousted from the soil of Bangladesh and the final victory is achieved" (Hannan, 2014).

### **M. Organization of regular forces and irregular forces and the ultimate victory**

During the war of liberation, the term irregular force was used for freedom fighters who were not members of the regular forces (Army, EPR, Police, Ansar, etc.). In official documents, the force was eventually listed as the FF or Freedom Fighters (Hossain, 2019). No martial law was in force for this force. The members of this force were not given any salary or allowance. The number of members of this force was about 80,000 (Rahman [Volume II], 1982). When the then Mujibnagar government of Bangladesh

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was busy forming various sectors and brigades, various irregular forces were formed in the name of local leaders in the remote areas; students, workers, farmers, and people of all levels participated. These irregular forces continue to fight in areas covered by different sectors (Hossain, 2019). These irregular forces were formed mainly based on local and political ideology.

Notable among these self-motivated forces formed during the War of Liberation was KaderiaBahini of Greater Tangail District (named after former Lance Naik Abdul Quader Siddiqui), HemayetBahini of Greater Faridpur (now Gopalganj) District (named after HabildarHemayet Uddin of Army), George Bahini of Dinajpur (named after George, a former member of the Army), forces of Siddique of Bhola High Command (named after NaikSiddiqur Rahman of Army), AwalBahini of Brahmanbaria (named after Subedar Abdul Awal of Army), and Halim Bahini of Manikganj (named after Captain Halim, probably the Commander of the Pakistan National Guard). Besides, the names of MujibBahini formed during the war of liberation and Dhaka guerrilla forces and Dhaka guerrilla groups are also particularly noteworthy (Hossain, 2019).

However, there were two general similarities between the rebellious features of the forces which revolted regularly or irregularly in the early resistance period of the war of liberation. The first match is their patriotism, which is why they revolted in their respective areas without any mutual agreement. The second similarity is that wherever they revolted, they received an unprecedented response from the local people. In other words, at the initial stage of resistance and organization, the common people were the main driving force of these forces. So whether it was a regular force or an irregular force, it was the common people who brought them together. In the course of the war, all those forces helped each other and finally snatched the independence of Bengal. Therefore, the liberation war of Bangladesh set an example in the history of the world as a different event. Too many countries of the world have not been able to achieve the glory of gaining independence through the war of liberation. The success of this war has been achieved through the participation of the people of Bengal including the peasants, workers, middle class, students, and youth. Following that, Colonel Osmani was appointed by the Mujibnagar government as the Commander-in-Chief of the Liberation Army to organize the war of liberation (Raja, 2014).

As soon as he took charge, Colonel Osmani planned to expand and reorganize the regular forces and gradually built up the sector, brigade, air force, and navy. Besides, he brought the freedom fighters formed with irregular forces or civilian forces on a local basis into the organizational structure of the Bangladesh Forces. The enemy forces were numerous and they were equipped with modern weapons, so he consulted with Prime Minister Tajuddin Ahmed to arrange safe shelter and training for the freedom fighters to defeat them. The Bangladesh Forces headquarters was formed on Indian soil. At the request of Prime Minister Tajuddin Ahmed, the Government of India set up reception centers and asylum camps at the border. In these reception centers, young men from Bangladesh who wanted to go to war were sent to various training camps for military training knowing their identity and loyalty. Initially, 10 training camps were opened in Tripura, India. Later many more training camps were opened under different sectors. Besides, many youth camps were also set up in the border areas of India (Bangladesh Army, 2015). Thus, as a result of the success of the combined war of regular and irregular forces, Bangladesh became free from Pakistani aggression and gained independence.

## VII. CONCLUSION

Independence is now inevitable under the headline of Arthur K. Blood, a well-known journalist's commentary, which gives a clear idea of the context of the independence movement in Bangladesh. He said,

"Independence of East Pakistan is now essential. The movement for economic autonomy that started from within the framework of undivided-Pakistan will soon turn into the East Pakistan independence movement due to the overall humiliation of the East Pakistani people and 'Bangladesh' is just a matter of time. The question of cultural, linguistic and social driving forces is closely linked to economics and politics behind the current conflict."

The West Pakistanis could not accept this victory of the Bengalis. The West Pakistanis feared the possibility of developing friendly economic and cultural relations between Bangladesh and India. The military junta of West Pakistan knew that Bangladesh was going to be an independent state very soon, so they tried their best to delay this process. However, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, elected in 1970, was ready to establish normal and diplomatic relations with the major powers and neighboring countries by protecting the integrity of Pakistan. But in no way was he willing to be anyone's base (Rahman [Volume II], 1982).

To save Bengal from the rule of the West Pakistani rulers, he called upon the people to take part in the war of liberation on 26 March 1971. Responding to his call, the general public through the Sangram Parishad and the military and paramilitary forces through Colonel MAG Osmani jumped into the fray. Later, these two different states were reconciled through the Provisional Government, the successful outcome of which was independent Bangla (Hasan, 2015).

## VIII. ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to all of our parents and teachers who gave us the opportunity to be educated through acquiring knowledge. We are also indebted to Dr. A. T. M. Atikur Rahman, Professor of the Department of History, Jahangirnagar University, and Krishna Kumar Saha, Assistant Professor of the Department of Public Administration, Comilla University, Bangladesh for their invaluable advice, scholarly guidance, criticisms, and inspiration throughout our study life.

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### IX. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

There is no conflict of interest reported by the researchers while completing this study.

### X. DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

There was no potential conflict of interest reported by the author.

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