Lecture 8
Six-Point Movement of 1966 and Mass Uprising of 1969

Introduction

1. East Pakistan was facing a dire situation after being subjected to systemic discrimination year after year. Economic subjugation was a major factor that led to the dissatisfaction of the Bengalis of East Pakistan.

2. Bengali economists and the politicians started raising questions about the discriminatory policies that had resulted in disparities in the economic developments of the two wings.

Six-Point Movement

Discrimination and Exploitation by West-Pakistan

3. **Disparity in Employment in Government jobs**. The Bengalis were very poorly represented in the Civil Service and in the Armed Forces. Army, Navy and Airforce Headquarters and the ordnance factories were established in West Pakistan. Of the total commissioned officers in the Army and the Airforce only 5% and 17% respectively were from East Pakistan. Similar was the case in Navy. Following table shows the disparity in employment:

Year	Type of Job	East Pakistan	West Pakistan
1967-68	Civil Service of Pakistan (CSP)	186	326
	Pakistan Tax Service	86	141
	Customs and Service	40	76
	Railway Accounts Service	20	36
	Audit and Accounts	44	95
	Military Accounts	18	50
	Police Service of Pakistan	82	128
	Central Information	19	49

4. **Disparity in Revenue and Development Expenditure**.

Period	Region	Revenue Expenditure (Crore)	Development Expenditure (Crore)	Total Expenditure (Crore)	%
1950-51 to 1954-54	East Pakistan	171	100	271	20
	West Pakistan	720	400	1120	80
1954-55 to 1959-60	East Pakistan	254	270	524	26
	West Pakistan	898	757	1655	74
1960-61 to 1964-65	East Pakistan	1404	434	270	32
	West Pakistan	1284	2071	3355	68
1965-66 to 1969-70	East Pakistan	648	1655	2304	36
	West Pakistan	2223	2970	5193	64

Source: Report of East Pakistan Economists, in the Report of the Panel of Economists on the Fourth Five Year Plan (1970-75), Islamabad 1970. Reproduced in part in Pakistan Economic and Social Review University of the Punjab, Lahore, Special issue on Income Inequalities in Pakistan, 1976, Table 2, p.270.

5. **East-West Gap in Per Capita Income**.

	1949-50	**1959-60**	**1969-70**
Pakistan	311	318	424
West Pakistan	338	366	537
East Pakistan	287	278	331
East-West gap	51	88	206

6. **Disparity in Education**.

	Graduates			**Post Graduates**		
	1951	**1961**	**Change**	**1951**	**1961**	**Change**
Pakistan	86,000	82,000	-4.6	23,000	31,000	39.6
East Pakistan	41,000	28,000	-32.3	8,000	7,000	-12.0
West Pakistan	45,000	54,000	21.3	14,000	24,000	68.6

Source: Adapted from Akther (1963).

8. Mehboob ul Haq, the chief economist of the planning commission stated in 1968 that 66 per cent of country's industrial assets, 79 per cent of insurance funds, 80 per cent of bank assets were controlled by some twenty families. There was not a single Bengali family among the famous twenty families which controlled the economy of the country.

Background to Six Point Movements

10. Opposition leaders in West Pakistan called for a national conference on February 6, 1966 to assess the trend of post-Taskent politics. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, along with some members of Awami League joined the conference in Lahore. On February 5, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman placed six points before the meeting of subject committee for inclusion in the agenda of next day's conference. The proposal was rejected. Bangabandhu boycotted the conference.

11. The six points were:

a. 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.

b. The federal government should deal with only two subjects: Defence and Foreign Affairs.

c. Two separate, but freely convertible currencies for the 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.

d. The power of taxation and revenue collection should be vested in the federating units. The federation would have a share in the state taxes to meet its expenditures.

e. 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 units should be empowered to establish trade links with foreign countries.

f. East Pakistan should have a separate military or paramilitary force, and Navy headquarters should be in East Pakistan.

Translation of six-point into a Political Movement

17. Mujib convened a meeting of Awami League, on March 18-20, 1966, in which the six-point formula was endorsed. A booklet on six-point demand was also published. Between March and May 1966, Mujib and his colleagues campaigned extensively throughout East Pakistan and mobilized a mass movement.

18. The Six-Point Movement took an important turn on June 7, 1966, when the Awami League called a nationwide strike across East Pakistan. The response to the call was overwhelming. The armed forces opened fire at the protests in different places. 11 people were killed in Dhaka and Narayanganj city. Soon after, the Awami League decided to further intensify the movement. The movement now had the overwhelming support of the population of East Pakistan.

Reaction of the Pakistani Rulers and Response of Bangabandhu

14. Ayub Khan termed Sheikh Mujib a secessionist and a destructionist. He warned Sheikh Mujib of 'dire consequences' if failed to shun the idea of provincial autonomy.

15. Monem Khan, the infamous governor of East Pakistan, had publicly stated that "as long as I remain as the governor of this province, I will see to it that Sheikh Mujibur Rahman remains in chains."

16. A fearless Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was quick to respond to such false accusations and vile threats. In a mammoth public gathering at Paltan Maidan, he thundered: "No amounts of naked threats can distract the deprived Bangalees from their demand for provincial autonomy based on their six-point plan."

Significance of Six-point Movement in the History of Bangladesh

12. The six-point demand marks a unique and an important change of course in the annals of our history and thus is a milestone event in Bangladesh.

13. It was a movement in the-then East Pakistan, spearheaded by Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, which called for greater autonomy for East Pakistan.

14. The movement is considered a turning-point on the road to Bangladesh's independence.

12. The six-point formula shook the foundation of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. The proposal had exposed the fact that the real intention of Pakistan's ruling elite was to "strengthen" the central government, not Pakistan.

Mass Uprising of 1969

Agartala Conspiracy Case

19. Being frightened by the popularity of the Six Points Demand of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman the Pakistani government arrested Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and 34 other Bengali civil and military officers on 19th of June 1968 charging them with conspiracy. The case is popularly known as the Agartala conspiracy case. General Ayub Khan claimed that Sheikh Mujib and his political associates had been conspiring with the Indian Government in the city of Agartala, India to create an Independent Bangladesh.

20. People of East-Pakistan being convinced that the case itself was a conspiracy, started a movement for unconditional release of Sheikh Mujib.

Mass Upsurge, 1969

21. Following the arrest of Bangabandhu in Agartala Conspiracy case, student unrest started in 1968 against the tyrannical rule of Ayub Khan. The movement soon engulfed the whole of the then East Pakistan. Peasants, artisans, workers joined the movement almost in mass.

22. The student agitation of 1968 turned into a mass upsurge when Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhasani asked his followers to besiege Governors House. A huge procession 'gheraoed' the Governor's House after a public meeting at Paltan Maidan on 6 December 1968. The Maulana declared a Hartal following the clash between the people and the police. The hartal was observed throughout East Pakistan on 8 December.

23. On 4 January 1969 leaders of all Students' Group formed the Students' Action Committee (SAC) and declared their 11-point Program. The 11 Points included the Six Points of Awami League as declared by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

25. Immediately after the 11-Point program had been launched on 8 January 1969, eight political parties, including Awami League and NAP (Muzaffar) formed the Democratic Action Committee (DAC). They demanded Federal form of government, election on the basis of

universal adult franchise, immediate withdrawal of emergency and release of all political detainees including Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Khan Abdul Wali Khan and Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto.

26. Asaduzzaman, a leader of the Students Union (Menon), was killed when police opened fire at a procession. The death of Asad stirred the entire nation and the movement took the shape of a national upsurge. The situation of Dhaka went beyond control of the police when Matiur, a student of class IX, died of police firing on 24 January and Rustam was stabbed to death. Army was deployed in the city and curfew was imposed for an indefinite period. Indiscriminate firing of the army and the EPR caused death to a woman. The incidence caused widespread repercussions in the socio-political arena. Sergeant Zahurul Huq, an under-trial prisoner in the Agartala Conspiracy Case, died of bullet injury in the Dhaka Cantonment on 15 February 1969.

28. Maulana Bhasani declared from a meeting held on the evening of 15 February that there will be no payment of taxes if the 11-point demands were not fulfilled and political prisoners were not released. He further declared, if necessary, Sheikh Mujib would be forcibly taken out of jail.

27. After the meeting people began to set on fire the houses of the ministers. On 18 February 1969 Dr Mohammad Shamsuzzoha, Proctor of the Rajshahi University, was bayoneted to death. The news spread like wildfire throughout the country. Thousands of people thronged the Dhaka streets and highways ignoring curfew.

28. Amidst strong popular demand Ayub had to give way and declare that he would not contest the next Presidential Election. In the face of mass movement, the government withdrew the Agartala Conspiracy Case on 22 February 1969. The accused were released on the following day and the Race course Maidan saw a grand reception of the accused, where Sheikh Mujib was given his famous title Bangabandhu.

29. On 26 March the strongman of Pakistan, General Ayub Khan, had to hand over power to General Yahya Khan, chief of Pakistan Army. Martial Law was re-imposed, but simultaneously it was agreed that elections would be arranged soon on the basis of universal adult franchise, and parliamentary democracy would be introduced.