



Language Discrepancy and Separation of East Pakistan 1971

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ABSTRACT

The separation of the East Pakistan in 1971 is considered a dark phase in Pakistan's history. This article analyzes the fact that along with geographical, economic and political factors one of the most important causes was language discrepancy. The areas which Pakistan acquired at the time of partition were inhabited by people of different races who used to speak different languages for example Urdu, Balochi, Sindhi, Punjabi and Bengali. Despite of the fact that Bengali was mother tongue of the 57 percent of the population, Jinnah declared Urdu the official language of Pakistan. The claim of the Government was that Bengali language as official language means accepting demands of Hindus and communist elements and some discontented elements of Muslim League. The movement for making Bengali the official language started in 1947 throughout East Pakistan. This research study therefore will focus the language issue which led to certain movements. The paper examines that first lingual feelings generated, and later economic grievances developed which nurtured the Bengali separatist movement. Therefore, main research question of the paper is how language issue helped Bengali people to sharpen their national identity.

KEYWORDS

Language, Movement, official language, Bengal

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INTRODUCTION

Language has great importance in any culture and is basically the dominant feature of any ethnic nation. It represents nation's heritage. Language is that force, which is always behind the unity of any nation. Language cannot be imposed but it is adopted by the people. It is very difficult to eliminate the importance of language as language decides the culture and traditions of any society (Ray, 2020). When Pakistan established in 1947, national language of Pakistan was decided Urdu and Jinnah was very much clear about this decision. He, on many occasions declared that Urdu would be the national language of Pakistan, but this decision was not approved by the people of East Pakistan, and government faced strong opposition from the masses of that part of Pakistan. They started a very strong movement to Nationalize their Bengali language as well (Zaheer, 1994, p. 78). They were not ready to adopt Urdu as a state language. Whereas, in West Pakistan Urdu was used by the Pakistani government on postal stamps, coin, order forms, currencies and railway tickets even official letter heads were issued in Urdu language. The masses of West Pakistan were in the feelings of distrust and particularly students were not happy towards the behavior of the Pakistani government. Anti-Bengali ruling elite were also against the idea of Urdu language as national language, but the Government of Pakistan had decided to adopt Urdu as National language of Pakistan as Hindi was considered the Indian State language. Students and intellectual from Bengal resisted against this decision and they demanded again and again that, official language should be Bengali with Urdu. Because Bangla is the language of the 55% people of Pakistan which is 5% more than Urdu speaking people in Pakistan. The controversy of language started only after few months of independence in November 1947, in Karachi meeting of Pakistan educational conference was arranged. Minister of education of Bengal Faisal Rahman said in this meeting to introduce Islamic ideology and educational system, and declared that Bengali would not be on stationeries, envelops, money, forms and postcards of the government. They would be printed in English and Urdu. Non-Bengali leaders were in favour of the Urdu language as the language of Pakistan, but this decision was opposed by many East Pakistani leader of Tammadun Majlis. Abul Hashim in September 1947 organized the literary meeting and the purpose of the meeting was to discuss the issues of the language. The pamphlet of the meeting was published and entitled Pakistan ki bhasha "Bangali na Urdu" on September 15, 1947. This booklet was strongly appreciated in the circle of the Bengali as this booklet advocated Bengali language and this claim that Bengali language should be the medium of instruction in courts and private public offices of

Bengal at least. In coming days most of the liberal organizations and criminal section supported this idea and gradually it finally turned into a mass movement.

Progressive class, particularly from the East Pakistan not ready to accept this movement especially Urdu as state language. They started very strong movement in favor of Bengali language from East Pakistan in 1948. From 1947 to 1956, a national language movement brushed through East Pakistan. This movement thrived in 1956, after police had killed some students who were participating in a rally in February of that year. In an earlier phase this movement had resurgent challenges in its roots that initiated in 1947 and apparently over in 1948. When Bengali was proposed as the official language, language of the court of East Pakistan by the chief Minister and members of the East Bengali legislative Assembly unanimously voted for Bengali as the official language. This phase ended after Mr. Jinnah, an indisputable leader of the nation, had declared that the national language of Pakistan would be Urdu.

METHODOLOGY

This qualitative and analytical research study is based on historical document analysis. The primary and secondary sources used to proof the credibility of the study are collected from relevant books, articles and periodicals. The study is carried out using different research techniques, such as descriptive, explanatory and interpretive methods to analyze the subject matter. Language is a representative of any community it is not created by one person, but it is the heritage of hundreds of people and effort of countless individuals are seen in the culture. Language is in an institution which represent people their interest and their cultural growth. The people of East Pakistan were very sensitive about their language. After 1947, the Bengali language was not considered as national language although it was the language of majority of population that is why the people of East Pakistan lead a very strong movement just to recognize their language as state language. This movement started in the early years of the creations of Pakistan and acquired some success when it was accepted in a way that language was considered as the state language in the constitution of 1956. This movement left a very strong impact on the minds of the Bengalis they were not happy with the attitude of the leadership of West part of the Pakistan.

This research effort is to throw light on the importance of language that, how it contributes in determining the fate of any Nation. Language which is always adopted by the majority of the population not imposed by any authority. It is very difficult to disregard the language from the culture where the people really love their language. The significance of this study is to find out

how such ethnic issues should be treated to save nation from facing such debacle again. Mainly objective of the study are

To analyze the reasons of not accepting Bengali an official language.

- To analyze the reasons of opposition by the people of East Pakistan on making Urdu their national language.
- To analyze the discrepancy of language as the cause of the separation of East Pakistan.

DISCUSSION

During the British Raj in subcontinent Muslim communities lead a very strong movement which was called Urdu language movement. Because, Urdu had all the social, political and cultural drive and was symbol of political identity and culture of the Muslim communities of India. When the Mughal Empire rule fell down, this movement started in the mid of 19th century and later on society. Syed Ahmed Khan Aligarh movement fueled it. Pakistan movement and all India Muslim League was also influenced by this language moment and this debate over the status of Urdu language for the Muslim in India influence the Bengali to get up for their language and this Bengali language movement was started in East Pakistan from 1952. After 3 months of independence, the dynamic method of integration generated by the enthusiastic section of the society and non-contagious language differences started from East Pakistan. These Indian Bengali leaders believed that Urdu would be the national language of Pakistan. The only opposing newspaper, Daily Morning News claimed that this decision was opposed by many members of the Legislature. Bengali was omitted from the PCS examination and coin stamps and all the communication option. Urdu was employed everywhere subsequently this was enough to highlight the anti-Urdu feelings in Bengal. Whereas, English and Urdu were considered the accomplishment languages of West Pakistan. On 15 September 1947 Majlis issued a pamphlet entitled, “Rashtrabhasha Bangla na Urdu” and this pamphlet advocated powerfully Bengali language and assured that it had potentials to become a language of the courts and offices at least in East Bengal (Rehman, 2003, p. 88).

In 1948, at Dhaka ruling Muslim League party and leftist organized camp and the purpose of this was to resist in contradiction of the anti-Bengali and actually policies of the Administration for seven days camp was continued and they criticized all the policies of the government against Bengali language. They were very vocal to defend the language that Bengali language can be the national language. On 4th January 1948 Student League was formed, another organization established by the group of pro Soharwardi, student’s leader of all Bengal Muslim League. They

wanted to make government realize equal agenda for East and West Pakistan and t also protested against club posters and anti-Bengali policies; this organization played very important role from 1948 to 1952. In two phases of the Bengali language movement when it played tremendous role to achieve the targets.

Their demands were as follows:

1. Bengali will be:
 - a) In the East Pakistan medium of instruction.
 - b) The official and court language of EP.
2. Urdu and Bengali would be central languages of the State
3. (a) Bengali would be the medium of instruction in educational system where it was considered the first medium to receive education and hundred percent of the people would receive this education
 - (b) In East Pakistan Urdu would be treated as second language for interview and it would be considered as a second language to those people first in West Pakistan and it would be very adequate that Urdu would be used only 5 -10 percent of the population.
 - (c) English would be considered third language and international language.
4. Official languages would be Bengali and English (Badruddin, 1972, p. 9).

Constituent Assembly of Pakistan 1947 and Language Issue:

In the Karachi when Constituent assembly first session was held on 23rd February 1948 and the members need to speak about the need of English and Urdu language. Assembly member from the East Pakistan Congress focused on that, Bengali should be the language of the constituent assembly as like English and Urdu. As out of 69 million population of Pakistan total 44 million were from the Bengal and their mother tongue was Bangali. Liaquat Ali Khan who was PM of Pakistan and CM of East Bengal Khwaja Nizamuddin who opposed this motion strongly. Liaquat Ali Khan strictly said that there would be the only one language in the policy and criticized the motion which was moved by the Dhirendranath Datta. He said such motion is just to generate a gap among the people of Pakistan it should be removed as it will divide the unifying force in Pakistan. There in the Dhirendranath Datta protested against the Liaquat Ali Khan's comments and

he said, that it was not intentions of him he was just fighting for the basic rights of the East Bengalis to recognize their language”. (Afzal M. R., 1967, p. 11)

On February 25, 1948 Khwaja Nizamuddin started his speech on the platform of the Constituent assembly and he claims that mostly people in East Pakistan in favor of Urdu as State language. He said that it is his responsibility that house should know about the will of the majority of the individuals of East Pakistan as far as the Bengali language is concerned. He said that there should be inter communication between the provinces. (Kabir, 1980, p. 76) This is the point of view of the central government of Pakistan Urdu as State language. However, people of Pakistan considered that Bengali should be adopted in educational field and administration of the province. He referred the statement of Liaqat Ali Khan that there is no any other way regarding expulsion of Bengali from the province it is so natural that he was belongs to Nawab family of Dhaka who were Urdu speaking and was used to live in Bengal and using Bengali language. There all the anti-Bengali members and Liaqat Ali Khan workout challenge on the floor of the constituent assembly by the Hindu members who fully supported there Indira Nath Dutta historic challenge and different at the right place of the Bengali on the 25th February 1948. (Afzal., 2001, p. 55)

This Bengali language movement reached on its peak when it was noted that it was excluded from the coins stamps and currency notes and another enlisted test and also from the constituent assembly. On 11 March, 1948 general strike was object observe the purpose was stripe to reject the Bengali language. People of the various parts of the city joined that strike. 50 demonstrators beaten and charged by the police and a lot of students were arrested by the police. Political leaders were badly treated and this anger grower and in coming days and strike was observed during 12th March to 15 March Chief Minister Nazimud din point of view about the issue that this is Hindu stimulated act and seven-point agreement was signed to release all the people who were arrested. Additionally, he secured that government of East Bengal would adopt a resolution and Bengali language would be the language of medium of instruction on all stages of education and official language of East Bengal.

Muhammad Ghulam Kabir argued that Bengali as official language was demanded by the constituent assembly and provincial League of East Bengal ruling party Muslim League. It looks as government was trying to give the impression within the public that language movement was basically inspired and encouraged by the Indian Hindu leaders. Dawn also alleged that due to the conspiracy of fifth columnist language movement reached at its height however, this was not factual Hindu leaders had very little reference to it and this was declared by the Indira Nath Dutta

in the session of constituent assembly on April 10th 1952 that this moment was just led by the Muslims of East Bengal and they are carrying alone inside and outside of the Bengal to defend the Bengali language as it is their mother tongue” (Baxter, p. 126)

Quaid-e-Azam and language issue:

Khawaja Nazimuddin signed agreement of general education and accepted the reservation within the provincial assembly about the announcement of Quaid e Azam when he visited the province and said Bengali cannot be the official language. A compromise was reached between the Centre and Province and Bengali language movement was subsided for the time being and strike and protest throughout the East Pakistan came to halt. They were of the view that tour of Governor General in East Pakistan would bring some fruitful results for them. Jinnah declared that Urdu would be implemented as the official language of state of Pakistan and issue got revived on March 21, 1948. A public meeting was held and there he stressed on the state language as Urdu and no other language, but he left some questions regarding the language policy. On March 24, 1948 in his famous speech held in convocation at the University of Dhaka, he said, we will do no mistaken surrogate just one state language should be of the state. After that students again began their protest in the March 1948. He declared that everyone should accept this decision of the Federal Government of Pakistan.(Ahmed, 1959, p. 43)

On 28th March from Dacca right before his departure, Jinnah in his speech on radio reaffirming his "Urdu-only" policy. Protesters mostly students blow up instantly after week-long visit of Jinnah. Categorical action of Jinnah in favor of Urdu became the reason of instant protest by number of students who were attending the convocation. He delivered a very strong identical speech in the University of Dhaka on March 24 and was interrupted by the audience of the students in every segment. He controlled the committee of action gathering there and pursued them to realize the need of one national language. However, students of Dhaka University were not persuaded overruled the agreement, signed by Khawaja Nazim ud din with the student leaders. It was the last hope East Bengal lost at that Day on 28 March 1952. Again, when he had to leave, he delivered speech on radio and stressed on Urdu only policy which again ignite students who were tested strongly in a weeklong visit of Jinnah. (Ali, 1967, pp. 43-45) Throughout, East Pakistan language movement reached at its peak, however the purpose of this visit remain unresolved and it seemed that he was given only one-sided picture and miss representation was conferred to him. It was presented to him that Bengali language as the state language was a demand from the Hindu and Communist anti Pakistani components not by the East Bengal. This demand was not by the

majority of the people of Pakistan but just a conspiracy and some discontented leaders of Muslim League were doing this. Unfortunately, he did not get enough time to use his political for sightedness to resolve and explore the issue as he did in 1937 when at Lucknow, throughout the session of all India Muslim League he defended the Urdu as the official language of Muslim League and he tabled the issue in favor of Urdu. Although it was opposed by the Bengali delegate's kind intervention but and Urdu language as the official language of Muslim League was adopted in final version of resolution.

Khawaja Nazimuddin became the Governor General of Pakistan; he was succeeded to hold the position due to his lifelong alliance with the Bengali Muslim League leaders. No doubt that his period was just on time and but failed to handle the conspiracy and the policies followed. He tried to survive within the Pakistani politics at any cost as he himself was considered Pro Bengali language activist, although, he did not take any strong and daring step in this regard and convince the East Pakistan to accept the reforms of the government. He introduced 6 Year program in which Urdu was considered the state language and language of educational system on January 27, 1952. He delivered a speech and repeated the views of the kind that Urdu would be the State language. This left negative reaction among the students and they express harshly against this speech and stressed that Bengali should the state language as well (Sayeed, 1968, p. 210)

Language section of 1952 and its consequences:

Language controversy in the start of 1952, raised two queries of significant importance as Liaquat Ali Khan and Muhammad Ali Jinnah were not there to resolve the problem. became As PM of Pakistan Nazimuddeen was not in position to grip this kind of serious issues in a fair way in East Bengal. Individuals were not happy towards the anti-Bengali policies of the Maharaja and Punjabi dominated upper class. Political crisis was there in Pakistan they were facing financial crisis as well and this situation was additional to it. Common man of East Pakistan started to lose faith in their founder party that is Muslim League and they started to look for replacement which they found in the form of Awami Muslim League. It was founded by Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bashani, 1949. Sense of exploitation and deprivation was exploited by the Awami league and they said that this British imperialism should be replaced and now in a new momentum came in language movement in this circumstances (Salik, 1997, p. 217). Fundamental principles committee on January 1952 recommended to the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan for declaring that Urdu should be the state language that really annoyed the people of East Pakistan and they started protest. On 31st January a gathering of cultural and political organizations all party Central

language Action Committee held a meeting which was chaired by Maulana Bhashani. Kazi Gulam Mahbub and Maulana Bashani in that meeting planned to take a decision of strike and demonstration and processions throughout the East Pakistan (G.W. Choudhury, 1967). The preparation of demonstration leads the Government of Pakistan to impose section 144 and demonstration, processions and all kind of meetings were forbidden. Central language Action Committee on 20th February planned the gathering, under the leadership of Abdul Hashim and they made decision to design a strategy how the strike would work and regarding the violation of the section 144. Students were very much excited and enthusiastic to violate the section 144 and on 21st February they gathered at the campus of the university, the vice-chancellor and administration tried to stop the students but they were not ready to listen and were ready for the demonstration. Student from the different colleges and schools gathered at the Dhaka University gave a deaf ear to the request of the administration. The police were fully armed waiting outside. Even the female students in Dhaka were preparing for demonstration and breaking the section 144 which, the government had imposed on them (Lawrence, 1971).

Administration prohibited the police not to open fire on the students and ask students to go away but students shouted badly and they were ready to violate section 144, police arrested many students who were assembled at the Legislative Assembly blocked legislature and they insisted them to present their demands in front of the Assembly. Some of the students started to storm into the building of the Assembly, police opened fire and 2 other persons, and 3 students were killed. The news of the killing spread out within few minutes across the town, public transport, offices, shops backup and strike started within the provincial assembly. Chief Minister Noorul Ameen visited the students who were wounded and admitted in hospital and adjunct the session as proof that they were in mourn but Noorul Ameen refused to accept that request many members went out and join the students. Noorul Ameen was not ready to accept the demand of masses. In Assembly police was forbidden again and again by the administration not to open fire on the students but that serious incident put fuel into fire. On 22nd February 1952 next day of the event prayer for the victims turned up session in morning and again police and military responded to the public, many deaths resulted whereas many of the protestors were arrested. A Memorial was built up at the very place where the students were killed (Arif, 2001).

RESULTS

There was a thousand miles distance among the two Wings of the state which further enhanced cultural, religious and social differences. In the early years of establishment of Pakistan, it was

considered that Bengal is culturally, socially and economically different and they are not fit in the framework of United Pakistan. One of the demands of the movement was that East Pakistan should be named as Bangladesh means the land of Bengal subsequently which led to the Bangladesh. In 1971 Liberation war there was no more language issue in East Pakistan as it was resolved 15 years before in the constitution despite all of that for nationalism. Foundation was led in East Pakistan by this language movement and this hostility between the two Wings of Pakistan was highlighted. Further within East Pakistan sentiment of hatred and deep anger were mostly generated which extended further discrimination in economic resources and cumulative concentration of Western segment in the political power of the State. This was the Language issue which actually made people of Eastern part to think on economic, social and political deprivation by the Central government. Bengalis always complaint about the equal development and growth between the two parts. Bulk of the foreign exchange was shared by them in much smaller share of the government revenue. Among the people of the East Pakistan political deprivation was prevailed and they felt that they were governed by the West Pakistan particularly Punjab in over-all because Central power remained strongly in the hands of the Punjabi and elites of West Pakistan. All the East Pakistani have numerical security but they were not given their due share in the Legislature domination of the religious leaders and old landlords was there in the government and in the Muslim League from Sindh and Punjab which was the ruling party (Salik, 1997, p. 225).

In 1951, when Liaqat Ali Khan was murdered concentration of power in the office was in West Pakistan got higher rank and importance seats. They opposed decentralization of authority because of their self-centeredness and they wanted to hold power themselves this generated factionalism and separatism in the political structure of fragmentation and instability.

When Pakistan came into being Islam was formally declared as the official religion of the state and ideology of Pakistan was formed according to the religious Islam. These principles of religion of Islam were followed by very few people practically. Leading figures of the Muslim League Provincial Government and Central Government practice Islam in their private life and those who practiced it as just personal spiritual exercise but there were also the elements in the government who practiced their lives as secular and even irreligious nonbelievers and their private life have no religion but religion was used just to exploit the people in the same way. Language controversy can also be understood in this context.

We cannot deny the importance of language in any society it is not just the medium of communication and instruction, but it is the identity of any community. Professor Tariq Rahman

and Professor Shahid writing extensively talk about the importance of language and uses of the language in ideological social and political culture of Pakistan.

Since the Inception of the country in Pakistan, language has been contested. Pakistan was considered Islamic state and Urdu was considered the security of Islamic culture. Ruling class of the Pakistan was in favour of the Urdu and no other language would be adopted as official language of Pakistan, all the acquaintance and knowledge of Urdu was very limited in East Bengal but in the many regions of West Pakistan where many regional languages was common. Middle class Bengali knew not much about Urdu. They were expert in their own Bengali language. Same case was with the Elite class of West Pakistan knew nothing about Bengali language. Regional language of Pakistan was not developed. Urdu had this edge of being the language of elite class of West Pakistan which was exploiting class of the time. This was the reason that Bengali language was demanded as the official language of East Pakistan and medium of instruction in Bengal.

In the whole of Pakistan rulers decided to impose Urdu as the only state language and this was not the justification that Urdu would be guaranteed to save the culture and Islamic values in Pakistan. They argued that, Urdu would safeguard Islamic literature for the declared and Muslim would use it in subcontinent as vehicle of Islamic culture no other language can be suitable for the official state language except the Urdu this is the language which can make Pakistan Islamic state of the world (Badrudin, 1972).

This was not end at all Urdu was imposed on the people who were Bengali speaking and their try to suppress their mother tongue in every possible manner. Pakistani government introduced the language policy that was limited to the areas of state language not covered the Bengali culture they failed badly to manage the language issue in Pakistan and this claim that Urdu would be the state language actually determined the attack on the feelings of the Bengali speaking people on their culture and language. They attacked consistently till 16 December 1971. In 1956 formal recognition of Bengali language as a state language by the Pakistani government was accepted in the constitution of 1962 was also considered the language but it did not prevail in Pakistan. It could not have been otherwise. Under the cover of distinctions of Hindus and religious organizations the rulers of Pakistan trying to promote class conflict and interest. All the language policy is one of the aspects of national ideology but through this instrument they never try to get the benefits why this language issue the growth of culture and education social political development in East Pakistan was trifle and kept under control of the central government. This language policy in East Bengal was a national depression and general policy totally integrated accordingly Bengali

language without defeating their more general policy of national reparation could not be made free from their attack.

CONCLUSION

This was the wrong planning of the administration of Pakistan that this language policy did not handled nicely but opened up a new opportunity for them to develop the Bengali language and Bengali culture. Mostly the purpose of the national language is to unite the different units of the state but Urdu language as State language created division and resentment between the two parts of the country and it was widely recognized that in all phases Bengali language movement was one of the most strong language movement in the history of Pakistan which laid the foundation of the nationalism based on language eventually caused emergence of independence state card Bangladesh although two Nation theory between the two parts was binding force otherwise nothing was common in in Muslim identity religion and culture shared by the people in two parts all the burdened class of the East Bengal with the hope of achieving better life subsequently joined Pakistan movement but establishment was failed to give them their hopes Pakistan had inter regional libraries from the very start and when the Urdu was declared the state language it is in hands the animosity between the two wings and the language activities participated and through aesthetically in the moment even they were ready to die for their mission. Language movement led the people of East Pakistan to think about liberation from west Pakistan and the idea to get a separate Homeland where the Bengali would be their state language and nobody can damage their culture by imposing their own language the first part of the government was to destroy the local language and culture and D grade their identity in the name of national language there was no doubt that neither integrate nor separate days become an Asian but legacies of the Bengali language movement transferred the test of time inquisition of Urdu by the west Pakistan on the east Pakistan was the biggest mistake of the Federal Government of Pakistan which resulted long-term negative consequences they ignored the bitter realities they were in aliens and controls which brought was reserved for them and for the Pakistan

Proper respect and status to all languages should be given by the government in all the regions and provinces not only Urdu was important but all the mother tongue were important as everyone was important in the country all the people who sacrificed from the feet for the freedom should be paid in their respective regions promotion of native language should be essential and this was the best solution of the problem all relative language should be given liberation to flourish and state should be insured the preservation of all languages and all culture and this would enhance the pride and

Unity from all respects among the distinctive crops and ethnic groups of Pakistani national hood already ethnicity has divided Pakistan Urdu was no doubt beautiful Express available and had a very strong literature existed in Indian subcontinent last two three centuries yes it was spoken many parts of Pakistan specially in the urban class but this is also the reality that Bengali was also language of majority. This separation could be avoided if major two dissatisfactions, lingual and economic, should be handled carefully in early days of emergence of Pakistan.

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