

❖ Language Movement (1952) :

The language movement is one of the most important events of our Bangladeshi culture. This was the first step towards the growth of Bangladeshi nationalism and for a unique and separate identity as a Bangladeshi.

After the creation of Pakistan, from 1948 to 21 February 1952 the movement in east Pakistan to make Bengali one of the state languages of Pakistan was called Language Movement.



The language movement was divided into two phases.

1. By 1948, the movement was largely confined to the educated and intellectual classes.
2. By 1952, the language movement had spread throughout the Bengali nation.

❖ Background of the Language Movement:

The state of Pakistan was formed on 14 August, 1947 on the basis of biracialism. The two part of Pakistan had no similarity in respect of history, tradition, culture, language. Despite the parts; West Pakistan and East Pakistan (East Bengal) having situated 1000 miles apart, they become one on the basis of only religion. The ruler class from the West Pakistan vested themselves to exploit the East Pakistan in suppressive manner from the very first day of Independence from British Monarchy in August 1947. They had tried to impose Urdu' as the state language; which was only spoken by a minor 3.27% people ignoring the vast majority of 56.40% of its total population speaking Bengali. The rulers from West Pakistan declared Urdu as the state language of Pakistan ignoring the opinion of the majority group. The scholars of Bengal erupted in oppose of the decision. They strongly protested this discriminating decision. In this way, the language movement started to get its momentum. The agitation reached its peak in 1952. The whole country (East Pakistan) followed the demonstration. The first time in the world history; Salam, Barkat, Rafique, Jabbar and many other embraced martyrdom for the love of their mother tongue. Language movement had sowed the seed of independence within the dream of

Bengali Nation. This motivated the long thriving struggle and revolution to give birth of a new country - our beloved Bangladesh.

❖ Reasons Behind the Language Movement :

➤ **Irrational decision to make Urdu the State language of Pakistan :**

They had tried to impose Urdu' as the state language; which was only spoken by a minor 3.27% people ignoring the vast majority of 56.40% of its total population speaking Bengali. The rulers from West Pakistan declared Urdu as the state language of Pakistan ignoring the opinion of the majority group. They used Urdu in the office, court as a official language.

➤ **Development of Bengali nationalism :**

In just a few years, Gana-Azadi League, Democratic Juba League, East Pakistan Muslim Chatra League, Awami Muslim League etc. were established. They raised their voice and demanded to make Bengali the state language along with Urdu.

➤ **The Emergence of Various Organizations :**

Besides, many organizations like Tamuddin Majlis, Rashtrabhasha Sangram Parishad, All-Party Rashtrabhasha Sangram Parishad etc established in that time. Through all these organizations Bengali nationalism developed. As a result, the people of East Pakistan were not willing to give concessions.

Emergence of Intellectual Class :

Many intellectuals like Professor Abul Kashem, Dr. Muhammad Shahidullah, Maulana Akram Khan, Kazi Motahar Hossain has emerged. They came to light and play an important role to the language movement.

Economical Reason:

Although the language movement started as a cultural movement, but there were economic reasons behind this movement. Since the creation of Pakistan, there has been food shortage in East Bengal due to their discriminatory policies. Due to their discriminatory policies, famine occurred in Khulna, Faridpur, Sylhet, Mymensingh and North Bengal in 1948-1949 and 1951. As a result, the revolt of peasants, workers and lower-middle class people later turned into a political demand.

➤ **The failure of the rulers to run the state**

➤ **Torture of Bengalis by the Petwa forces of Pakistan:**

On 31st August 1947, anonymous Pakistani gangster attacked the students of Fazlul Haque Hall of Dhaka University. As a result, dissatisfaction was created among the students.

➤ **Events of Language Movement :**

The state of Pakistan was formed on 14 August, 1947 on the basis of biracialism. The two part of Pakistan had no similarity in respect of history, tradition, culture, language. Despite the parts; West Pakistan and East Pakistan (East Bengal) having situated 1000 miles apart, they become one on the basis of only religion. The ruler class from the West Pakistan vested themselves to exploit the East Pakistan in suppressive manner from the very first day of Independence from British Monarchy in August 1947. They had tried to impose Urdu' as the state language; which was only spoken by a minor 3.27% people ignoring the vast majority of 56.40% of its total population speaking Bengali.

First, at the National Education Conference in Karachi in November 1947, the original proposal supported Urdu and English as the only state languages. There was immediate opposition and protest.

Later, Dhirendranath Dutta, a member of the Pakistan Constituent Assembly, first demanded that Bengali be made the official language of Pakistan along with Urdu. However, on March 21, 1947, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the first Governor-General of Pakistan, declared that Urdu and Urdu would be the only official state languages of Pakistan. The Bengali people opposed this declaration. Students and intellectuals in East

Pakistan protested and demanded that not only Urdu but also Bengali should be one of the state languages. In 1947, the language movement started in this province known as East Pakistan.

A general strike was held on March 11, 1948, in which students of language universities and other colleges in the city protested against the exclusion of Bengali language from official use. Political leaders including Shamsul Haque, Shawkat Ali, M Sirajul Islam, Kazi Golam Mahbub, Oli Ahad and Abdul Wahed were arrested during the rally. A meeting was held on the afternoon of March 11 to protest the police brutality and arrests. Then a gathering of students proceeded towards the Secretariat building. Several students and leaders, including AK Fazlul Haque, who were in the procession at the time, were attacked and injured by police. Due to civil unrest, the Governor General of Pakistan Muhammad Ali Jinnah arrived in Dhaka on 19 March 1948. He again declared that "Urdu, and Urdu only" embodied the consciousness of the Muslim nation and would remain the state language. On March 24, he made the same statement at Curzon Hall of Dhaka University. Both meetings were interrupted by a large section of the audience. The students formed the 'State Language Action Committee' and worked tirelessly to make Bengali one of the state languages of Pakistan. Immediately after the tragedy of February 21, 1952, the then Prime Minister of Pakistan Khwaja Nazimuddin announced in a public meeting that Urdu should be made the state language of Pakistan. The students were outraged by the announcement because in 1948, Nazimuddin, as the Chief Minister of East Bengal, had signed a pledge with the leaders of the State Language Action Committee by the Provincial Council to adopt Bengali as another state language of Pakistan. Subsequently, the students of Movement Dhaka University and Dhaka Medical College

took a strong stand for the language movement and took an important decision and on February 21, 1952 denied the will of the politicians to violate Section 144. At 3:30 pm on the orders of the Police Magistrate(West Pakistani) opened fire on a peaceful procession of students. Barkat, Rafiq, Jabbar, Shafiur and Salam, among others, dedicated their precious young lives to the preservation and preservation of their mother tongue, Bengali. This movement finally ended in 1956 with the adoption of Bengali as one of the state languages of Pakistan.



February 21st is a symbol of mourning, strength and pride in the life of every Bengali. International Mother Language Day is celebrated as Martyr's Day in Bangladesh because we have added a symbolic value to this day. It nurtured ideas of democracy and secularism. It has been celebrated all over Bangladesh, and across the borders of Bangladesh as a great national event.

❖ Importance/Significance :

Language Movement began in 1948 and reached its climax in the killing of 21 February 1952, and ended in the adoption of Bangla as one of the state languages of Pakistan.

➤ In the cultural field:

The language movement has not only enriched the Bengali culture but also the culture of the whole world. Every year 21st February is celebrated all over the world as the International Mother Language Day. We have struggled to acquire this language. '21 February' has been declared as 'International Mother Language Day' on 17 November, 1999 in the general assembly of UNESCO in Paris. Since 2000, this day has been observed in the international arena with proper honor and manifesto. Today, as a nation, we are proud that the highest sacrifices of Bangladesh, Bengali and our language movement are recognized, much admired, remembered with gratitude and honored worldwide.

➤ The beginning of a new horizon in Bengali literature:

Numerous plays, novels, films, poems and songs have been written about the language movement. As a result, a new horizon in Bengali literature was started through language movement.

➤ Creation of new occasions in Bengali culture:

This movement has given a new definition to Bengali culture through the development and inauguration of Bengali language, literature and

culture. Language is not only the main representative of the culture of a nation, it creates patriotism and nationalism in the minds of the people. Martyr's Day is celebrated on 21st February on the occasion of language movement. Besides, 21st February was declared a public holiday, a month-long Ekushey Book Fair was organized and "Ekushey Padak" was given to those who sacrificed their lives in the language movement.

➤ **Emergence of Intellectual Class :**

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➤ **Development of Bengali nationalism :**

In just a few years, Gana-Azadi League, Democratic Juba League, East Pakistan Muslim Chatra League, Awami Muslim League etc. were established. They raised their voice and demanded to make Bengali the state language along with Urdu.

➤ **The Emergence of Various Organizations :**

Besides, many organizations like Tamuddin Majlis, Rashtrabhasha Sangram Parishad, All-Party Rashtrabhasha Sangram Parishad etc established in that time. Through all these organizations Bengali nationalism developed. As a result, the people of East Pakistan were not willing to give concessions.

- **The Emergence of Political Consciousness**
- **The Shahid Minar became the center of Bengali emotion. The status of Bengali language increased.**
- **Non-communal consciousness develops From 1948 to 1952, the crisis in East Bengal was much less recent than before.**
- **How to Create Bengali Nationalism :**

Pakistani government had tried to impose Urdu' as the state language; which was only spoken by a minor 3.27% people ignoring the vast majority of 56.40% of its total population speaking Bengali. The rulers from West Pakistan declared Urdu as the state language of Pakistan ignoring the opinion of the majority group. They used Urdu in the office, court as a official language. Along with Dhirendranath Datta , all the people of east Pakistan raised their voice against it.

Tamaddun Majlish, is an Islamic cultural organization in Bangladesh, established in 1947 by Principal Abul Kashem in the former East Pakistan. It was one of the founding organizations of the Bengali Language Movement. On 15 September 1947, Tamaddun Majlish

published a pamphlet entitled "Bangla or Urdu, the State Language of Pakistan". Through this booklet, Professor Abul Kashem, Kazi Motahar Hossain and Abul Mansur Ahmed demanded to make Bengali the state language along with Urdu.

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Students, teachers, peasants, workers, men and women from all started a movement to make Bengali the state language.

Thus, when the Pakistani ruling class decided to make Urdu as the state language, all classes of people including East Pakistan politicians, intellectuals, students, teachers, farmers, workers, men and women protested through meetings, strikes and rallies under the leadership of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, which created Bengali nationalism.

THANK YOU