

❖ Six Point Movement :

The six point movement was a Nationalist movement in then East Pakistan, spearheaded by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, which called for greater autonomy for East Pakistan. It is considered a milestone on the road to the history of the independence of Bangladesh.

According to Raunaq Jahan, “Although the six-point movement was short-lived, it brought about a major change in Bengali politics and determined the pace and nature of subsequent political movements”.

SIX POINT MOVEMENT



❖ Background / Reasons Behind the Six Point Movement :

The main reason for proposing this six point programme was to end Master-slave rule in Pakistan. To get rid of the colonial rule and exploitation of Pakistanis, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman announced the six points program in 1966. The purpose of

Bangabandhu was to free East Pakistan from the discrimination through realising six points demand. Basically after the end the war between India and Pakistan, Bangabandhu raised voice against the extreme negligence of the West Pakistan Government to the security of East Pakistan and limitless disparity toward East Pakistan in political, economic, administrative, military, educational affairs as well. Bangabandhu presented the 'six-points' demand (titled 'amader bachar dabi: chhoy dafa karmashuchi') on 5-6 February in 1966 when Opposition leaders convened a conference in Lahore.

Cultural

The first attack was on the language. Language, literature and culture of the two wings of Pakistan were quite different. East Pakistan had 56% of the total population. Urdu speaking people were only 3.27%. But the West Pakistan tried to impose Urdu as the state language of Pakistan. They hatred Bengali culture and pointed it as “anti-Islamic” and banned Rabindranath Tagor’s songs in national broadcasting centers.

Economic :

East Pakistan suffered from the highest disparity caused by the West Pakistan in economic affairs. The degree of exploitation by the West Pakistan was terrible. As a result East Pakistan could never be economically self-sufficient. Head-offices of banks, insurance and commercial organizations including The Central Bank were in West Pakistan. For this money was laundered to West Pakistan very easily. In the first one the government outlay from budget allocations in East and West Pakistan was 113 crore and 500 crore respectively. In the second one the budget allocations were 950 crore for East Pakistan and 1350

crore for West Pakistan. . At that time the rate of total government expenditure in East Pakistan was only 5.10%. 300 crore taka was spent for constructing Islamabad till 1967; whereas, the money spent for Dhaka was 25 crore taka. In the matter of allocating foreign aids East Pakistan got only 26.6% during the period of 1947-1970.

Administrative :

The officials of the civil service were the key force in the Pakistani administration. In 1962 there were only 119 Bangalees among 954 high ranking officials in the Ministries. In the central government offices there were 42000 employees, among them only 2900 were Bangalees. As the capital was set up in Karachi in 1947, the West Pakistanis got employment in a large scale in all government offices.

In East and West Pakistan number of gazetted officials was 1338 and 3708 respectively; and the number of non-gazetted officials was 26310 and 82944 respectively. In the Foreign Service in 1962 there was only 20.8% representation of East Pakistan. In embassies in the foreign countries there were 60 ambassadors from West Pakistan out of 69.

Political

Although the state of Pakistan was born on the basis of the historic Lahore resolution, East Pakistan was never given the right to autonomy based on the Lahore resolution. Although the United Front won the elections in 1954, it was not allowed to form a representative government. Besides, in 1958, Ayub Khan imposed martial law and deprived the politicians of East Pakistan of their basic rights.

In 1965, August-September, India-Pakistan fought the war over the border issue of Kashmir for 17 days. But in those 17 days East Pakistan was totally unsafe because India could attack anytime and there was no Military force in the East Pakistan. When Bengalis questioned for their safety to Pakistan, they replied "Defense of East Pakistan lies in the hand of West Pakistan." But West Pakistan did not do anything. Bengalis couldn't tolerate this discrimination much longer. They started protesting. From this, a conference was held in Lahore in 5-6 February, in 1966. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman presented the six-point in that conference. "He demand for "absolute autonomy" based on his six-point formula seems to have shaken the foundation of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

Military :

Discrimination in the Army, Navy, & Air Force Punjabis had been occupying the top post. In 1955, among 2211 army officers Bangalees were only 82. In 1966, among 17 top ranking officials, there was only one Bangalee . Among 5 lakhs soldiers, Bangalees were only 20000 .

Six Points :

The six points are noted as being-

1. The constitution should provide for a Federation of Pakistan in its true sense on the basis of Lahore Resolution and the parliamentary form of government with supremacy of a Legislature directly elected on the basis of universal adult franchise.

2. The federal government should deal with only two subjects: Defense and Foreign Affairs, and all other residuary subjects shall be vested in the federating states.



3. Two separate, but freely convertible currencies for two wings should be introduced; or if this is not feasible, there should be one currency for the whole country, but effective constitutional provisions should be introduced to stop the flight of capital from East to West Pakistan. Furthermore, a separate Banking Reserve should be established and separate fiscal and monetary policy be adopted for East Pakistan.
4. The power of taxation and revenue collection shall be vested in the federating units. The federation will be entitled to deposit a certain portion in the federal fund. The federal government shall use this fund to meet its expenditures.
5. The federal units shall have the full authority to regulate foreign exchange earnings and trade links. 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.

6. To safeguard regional solidarity and national security the provinces should have the authority to form and control their own militia or paramilitary force.

❖ Reaction of Six-point:

1. The government rejected the six points. They referred to Sheikh Mujib as a separatist and Sheikh Mujib was arrested.
2. Ayub Khan described the six points as a conspiracy to form a Hindu-dominated United Bengal.
3. Political parties (Muslim League, Jamaat-e-Islami, Nezami Islami, NAP (Bhasani) rejected the six points.
4. A part of the Awami League, including Maulana Abdur Rashid Tarkabagish, opposed the six points.

❖ Importance/Significance of Six Point programme/Movement :

The importance of the six-point movement is immense. The six-point movement was the precursor of some momentous events which were the triggering factors of the emergence of Bangladesh.

➤ Demand for Autonomy:

Six-point demand was first identified East Bengal as a separate region and demanded greater autonomy.

➤ **Creation of Bengali Nationalism:**

The six points were a symbol of hope and aspiration of Bengalis. This was the key to the characterization and self-reliance of the Bengali nation consisting of Hindus, Muslims, Christians and Buddhists in East Pakistan. As a result, the six-point movement was severely suppressed and the consciousness of the Bengali nation united them.

➤ **Increased the Popularity of Sheikh Mujib and Awami League:**

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman presented the six-point demand on behalf of the Awami League in 1966. As a result, the popularity of Sheikh Mujib and Awami League increased through six points. According to Raunaq Jahan, "Sixpoint movement whose main thrust was demand of greater autonomy for east Pakistan is regarded as the turning point in Mujib's rise to charismatic leadership".

➤ **Strong voice against exploitation:**

The six-point demand was the first strong protest against the long-running exploitation of East Pakistan by the Pakistani government. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman himself referred to the six points as "the Charter of Liberation of Bengal's peasants, workers, laborers, middle class and the common people to step towards the establishment of Bengal's rights".

➤ Six points awaken democratic values.

- Six point played an important role in the Agartala Conspiracy Case in 1968.
- The removal of Ayub Khan's dictatorship.
- Six point played an important role in the mass uprising of 1969.

➤ **The Election of 1970:**

The key factor in Awami League's election manifesto in 1970 was this six points program. The Awami League sought public mandate in favor of the six points program in the general elections of 1970. A landslide victory was gained with the absolute mandate from the people of East Pakistan in favor of six-point program.

➤ **The Seeds of Freedom:**

The seeds of Bangladesh's independence were sown in the six points. Because the first demand for autonomy was in the six points which helped the mass uprising in 1969 and the victory of Awami League in the election of 1970 which played an important role in the rise of independent Bangladesh.

