

CHARTER OF INDEPENDENCE: A CRITICAL STUDY OF MUJIB'S SIX POINT PROGRAMME

Abstract

This paper will try to explore the role of Bengali political leadership to transform the dream of separation of East Pakistan into reality. It will also provide a detailed and systematic study of Six Point Programme of Awami League which proved to be a 'charter of independence' and gave a comprehensive analysis of the basic demands of East Pakistanis and successfully combined public opinions in order to get mass support in the struggle for freedom from the West Pakistan. Moreover, this study will seek several waves of criticism regarding Six Point Programme by the state of Pakistan, political parties of West and East Pakistan, and even by the people within the Awami League.

Key Words: Six Point Formula, Two Economy Thesis, Secessionist Movement, Economic Disparities, Conspiracy Theories

The East Bengalis political elite played an important role in the separation of East Pakistan. It was economic exploitation which gave them an ample opportunity to win over popular support. They were conscious of these distinct geographical and cultural features, and they lost no occasion to project the differences between the two wings. They highlighted the points of 'separateness' in their speeches in the Constituent Assembly and the Provincial Assemblies. For instance, Abdul Mansur Ahmad, a prominent member from East Pakistan, observed in Constituent Assembly

Pakistan is a unique country having two wings which are separated by a distance of more than a thousand miles...religion and common struggle are the only common factors... with the exception of these two things, all other factors, viz the language, the culture...practically everything is different. There is, in fact, nothing common in two wings.¹¹

Setting the Stage for Separation

After becoming the President of Awami League in 1966, Sheikh Mujibur Rehman provided further impetus to the movement of the separation of East Pakistan through his mind blowing speeches, slogans and his famous Six Point Programme. Some glimpses from his speeches are as follows.

The Awami League Leader regretted that East Pakistan had to bear the country's major burden of paying off annually Rs. 100 crore interests of foreign loans although barely one-fourth of Rs. 2000 crore was spent in this wing. Other

¹ COMSATS Institute of Information Technology, Lahore

¹¹. Quoted in, *Constituent Assembly of Pakistan, Debates*, Vol. 1, 16 January 1956, p.1876. Quoted by, Safdar Mehmood, *Pakistan Divided*, (Lahore: Institute of Islamic Culture, 1989), p.2.

aspects of our life did not present any better picture.^{III} He further added that the perpetuation of the exploitation of East Pakistan brought the economy of the province on the verge of ruination. East Pakistan, which used to import from abroad annually while West Pakistan now produces eight hundred million tons surplus.^{IV} Referring to his Six Point Programme launched four year back, said, “we plunged into the struggle to save the people from exploitation, knowing full well its consequences, which we suffered later”.^V He told the East Bengali people that we cannot expect any genuine change for the better until we free ourselves from the clutches of the exploiters and the ruling class which ruthlessly suppressed the voice of people whenever they rose against the vested interests, looting our resources unchecked.^{VI}

Sheikh Mujib said, “All our legitimate interests were made subservient to exploitation by the vested interests. He charged that our flourishing weaving industry was made to suffer decay, Salt industry destroyed and Beedi industry dragged to ruination turning millions of people into virtual distrust only to make East Pakistan serve as market to exploiters from West wing”.^{VII} He further regretted, "the history of East Pakistan would have been different if some political Mir Zafar did not sabotage our causes. He accused them of playing the role of agents of exploiters, who happened to come from West Pakistan. They sold out our interests for ministerial jobs”.^{VIII}

On October 17, 1970 in Dolaikhal Sheikh Mujib said that Bonus Voucher system had destroyed the small traders of Bengal and he assured that he would safeguard the interest of the small business from the devouring grip of the big business and monopoly capital of West Pakistan.^{IX} In Dumni (Tejgoan) on October 20, 1970 Mujib told the cheering crowd who came from far flung areas in procession that the Six Point programme was to ensure justice for the people of west Bengal whose basic rights and privileges had so long been trampled underfoot. The programme, if implemented, would put an end once for all to the continued exploitation, oppression and suppression which had reigned supreme during the last many years.^X

^{III}. Mujib Asks People to assert their Right, Speeches in Hoar areas of Sylhet, Mimensing and Comilla Districts on October, 10, 1970, *The Bangladesh Papers: Why Did Pakistan Break? Who Was Responsible?*, (Lahore: Vanguard Books LTD), p.98.

^{IV}. *Ibid.*, p.98.

^V. *Ibid.*, p.98.

^{VI}. *Ibid.*, p.98.

^{VII}. *Ibid.*, p.98.

^{VIII}. *Ibid.*, p.98.

^{IX} *Ballot Battle My Last Fight to Secure Rights of East Bengal*, Mujib Speech at Dolaikhal on October 17, 1970, *The Bangladesh Papers: Why Did Pakistan Break? Who Was Responsible?*, P.99.

^X *Bengalis Shall not be Allowed to Turn Slaves*, Mujib speech at Dumni on October 20, 1970, *The Bangladesh Papers: Why Did Pakistan Break? Who Was Responsible?*, p.100.

In the same speech while recalling the long 23 years of independence, he said that Whenever people of Bengal raised their voices to get their due rights, lathi-charge, bullets and jails were in store for their leaders and workers and the bogey of 'Islam in danger' was raised to confound the political atmosphere of the country.^{XI}

Evaluation of Six Points Programme

Six Point Programme was evolved through different phases of history. The first Grand Convention of the Democratic Federation was held at Dhaka in November, 1950 in which some prominent Awami League leaders participated. Their constitutional proposals against the first report of the BPC provided for a 'United States of Pakistan' with only defense and foreign affairs in the hands of the federal government. On the subject of taxation, it was suggested by the Convention that centre only could impose taxes under some specified heads with the consent of the province. In the famous 21-Point Programme of East Pakistanis in 1954 a full provincial autonomy on the basis of the Lahore Resolution was demanded by giving center only defense and foreign affairs. The demands in the Six Point Formula were, therefore, based on the earlier proposals evolved through different phases in the history of East Pakistan.^{XII}

Salahuddin Ahmed is of the view that the main source of the inspiration of the Six-Point Programme lies on the original concept of Pakistan that it would consist of 'independent Muslim States'.^{XIII} He quotes Sir Hussain Suhrawardy saying that in 1942 Mr. Jinnah envisages the course followed in the evolution of the Union of the Commonwealth of Australia and the Dominion of Canada. The Muslim States will first function as separate and independent until in the British Commonwealth of Nations; and, if and when found feasible, confederate as equal partners by mutual consent with other parts of India and with other Dominions.^{XIV} He further quotes, on the eve of the Partition of India, even the British authorities believed that the units of Pakistan would be administratively and financially autonomous. On 5 February, 1946, Sir D Montearth^{XV} wrote to Lord Pethick-Lawrence as would seem more probable, Western and Eastern Pakistan exist as separate Units administratively and financially, but united by something like a treaty arrangement for policy purposes.^{XVI}

^{XI}. Mujib ur Rehman added that the very few privileged families had sucked the blood of East Bengal in such a way that the backbone of economy of this region had been shattered. The opulence and affluence by some have resulted in the huge bankruptcy of the masses in their respected province that had almost eventually turned into destitute. The people of East Bengal got as fruits of freedom was privation, absolute poverty, unemployment, full frustration and despondency all around, *Ibid.*, p.101.

^{XII}. Moudud Ahmed, *Bangladesh: Constitutional Quest for Autonomy 1950-1971*, (Dhaka: The University Press Limited, 1991), p.87.

^{XIII}. Salahuddin Ahmed, *Bangladesh: Past and Present*(New Delhi: A.P.H Publishing Corporation, 2004), p.158.

^{XIV}. Quoted in, Latif Ahmed Sherwanni, *Pakistan Resolution to Pakistan 1940-47*, p.35, Quoted by, Salahuddin Ahmed, *Bangladesh: Past and Present*, p.158.

^{XV} Permanent under Secretary of State for India

^{XVI}. Quoted in, Niclas Mansergh, *The Transfer of Power 1942-47*, Vol, Document no, 397, p.882, Quoted by, Salahuddin Ahmed, *Bangladesh: Past and Present*, p.158.

The Awami League was basically a middle-class party mainly consisted on various economic interest groups, which provided its main support in the country. They were surplus farmers, traders and small industrialists and the lower echelon of the civil service. The number of traders and industrialists were small in former East Pakistan; they suffered from comparative disadvantage in competition with their more established counterparts in Pakistan.^{xvii} All other contemporary political parties of Awami League in East Pakistan were losing their support in common asses and Mujib was vividly examining the situation.

Having considered the weakening position of the National Awami Party (NAP), the Awami League's only rival party with mass base, Sheikh Mujib decided to capture the public support in the existing vacuum by raising the popular demand for autonomy in more radical and concrete terms.^{xviii}

Tariq Ali argues about Awami League that the party which had formulated them became, in the eyes of the people, the only force able to fight for Bengali equality. 'Parity not charity' was the message of Mujib Rehman.^{xix} The Awami League Council meeting at Dhaka in February, 1966 proved to be a famous platform where Six Point Formula for autonomy of East Pakistan was adopted. In the same meeting Mujib was also elected President of the Awami League. It was presented publically in March, 1966 in Lahore before an all political parties meeting.

The main exponents of Six Point Formula were Tajuddin Ahmed, Mujib ur Rehman, and Ruhul Quddus. Majority of party workers did not know regarding the Formula till the Council Meeting held in February, 1966. This 'programme' had an important position in the life of all classes of East Pakistani society.

The programme was primarily financed by the rising Bengali business community and the wealthy owner of the Pioneer Press, Dacca helped printing the booklet free of cost.^{xx}

The East Pakistanis welcomed the Six Points Programme whole heartedly and it gained immense kind of support for a variety of reasons. Firstly, it challenged the political and economic monopoly of West Pakistan. Secondly, the East Pakistan's export earnings would no longer be exploited and manipulated for

^{xvii}. Narul Islam, *Development and Planning in Bangladesh: A Study in Political economy*, (London: C. Hurst and Company, 1977), p.21.

^{xviii}. Mujib ur Rehman wanted to take absolute advantage of the very objective conditions of the country. Other than Moulana Bhashani, all other potential East Bengali leaders had lost their strong contact with the common masses. They had alienated themselves from grass-root organizations. Although, the Jamat-i-Islam had a good organizational framework but it had failed to gain a big mass support due to stand on one strong centre' and some extreme religious views. With the help of the middle class and rising business community, Mujib proceeded to win the support of the common Masses. For detail see, Moudud Ahmed, *Bangladesh: Constitutional Quest for Autonomy 1950-1971*, p.79.

^{xix}. Ali, Tariq, *Can Pakistan Survive? The Death of State*, (Great Britain: The Chaucer Press Ltd,1983), p.80.

^{xx}. In start it was primarily a manifestation of the aspirations of the East Bengali middle class, the emerging business community and extreme nationalist politicians. Being the programme of a historically popular movement, the Six Point Formula soon gained a strong support amongst the lower middle class, workers, students and general intelligentsia. For detail see, Moudud Ahmed, *Bangladesh: Constitutional Quest for Autonomy 1950-1971*, p.86.

the growth of the industrialization of West Pakistan. Thirdly, foreign aid would no longer be monopolized for West Pakistan only. Fourthly, the East Pakistan would no longer remain an inferior and sub-ordinate market for West Pakistani products. Fifthly, the end of Economic priorities determined for the advantage of West Pakistan only.

Six Point Programme proved to be a ray of hope for almost all the sections of West Bengali society and soon its survival became a matter of life and death for East Pakistanis. The emerging industrialists and businessmen found in the Six-Point formula relaxation of intense competition and short cut route to prosperity. The labor and peasants found in the formula some chances of incoming change for the better. The Formula itself helped inspiring and consolidating the nationalist forces and soon became the vehicle of Bengali nationalist movement. The programme seemed to be a well-thought out concrete manifestation of the historical urge of the Bengalis and appeared to be a more solid and straight forward scheme compared to any other political programme ever offered to the country by a political party.^{XXI}

It is very interesting to note that Mujib tried to trace analogy between the Lahore Resolution and Six Point Programme by placing it in the same month and venue. In March, 1966 he was in Lahore, the same month and the same city where the famous Lahore Resolution (presented by *Sher-e-Bangla* Fazlul Huq) was passed in 1940. In a meeting when various political parties were present, he placed the Formula claiming to have been based on the principles of the Lahore Resolution, to save Pakistan from disintegration. He distributed the few hundred copies of the booklets of Six-Point Programme which he carried with him from East Pakistan with an explanatory note in reply to the criticisms already raised from different quarters.^{XXII}

Immediate Cause of Six Point Programme

General Gul Hassan writes in his *Memoirs*, that the Six Points were concocted soon after the 1965 war. In a nutshell the Six Points amounted to provinces minding their own business, with the central government being reduced to the status of a referee without a whistle. The 1968 (Agartala) conspiracy may well have been a result of the growing impatient on the part of the Sheikh and India over the non implementation of the Six Point Formula.^{XXIII}

Sheikh Mujib ur Rehman, the president of East Pakistan Awami League, presented Six Point Programme for provincial autonomy in an atmosphere which was least congenial for such 'extreme' demands.^{XXIV} The programme was announced immediately after the 1965 war with India. According to Talukdar Maniruzzaman, during the war with India in September 1965 East Pakistan was completely cut off from West Pakistan. The people of East Pakistan felt

^{XXI}. Ibid., p.86.

^{XXII}. Ibid., p.79.

^{XXIII}. Gul Hassan Khan, *Memoirs of Lt. Gen. Gul Hassan Khan*, (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1993), Appendix A.

^{XXIV}. Muhammad Waseem, *Politics and the State in Pakistan*, (Lahore: Progressive Publishers, 1989), p.281.

completely helpless.^{xxv} According to another source, during the 1965 war Pakistan had only half a division of soldiers stationed in the East Pakistan, a region surrounded by the 'enemy country' from three sides. The East Bengalis were terrified by the thought that India could run over them any time and this fear made them feel more neglected than ever before.^{xxvi}

The people of East Pakistan found themselves in an uncovered military posture during the short-lived war although India, for its own reasons made no significant hostile encroachment on their territory. However, the Bengalis had a weighty complaint to make about the war's impact on them. The scheduled economic development programme was cut 5 percent per cent, because of increased military costs. In the first year of the third five- year plan for 1965-70 which was to mark the beginning of provincial economic parity, funds to the Provincial Government were reduced. Moreover, double funds were allocated to the military expenditures for 1965 and 1966 at the expense of agricultural production in East Pakistan.^{xxvii}

Many Economists, during this period, particularly in East Pakistan, began to talk about the 'two economy theories' for Pakistan. According to Talukdar Mainruzzaman, the helplessness of the Bengalis during the war of 1965 with India and the increasing economic disparity between the two wings of Pakistan gave Mujibur Rehman, 'a political entrepreneur par-excellence'.^{xxviii} In a press conference, Mujib declared "the question of autonomy appears to be more important after the war. Time has come for making East Pakistan self-sufficient in all respects".^{xxix}

Six Points Programme

The position of the Awami League on provincial autonomy and the constitutional structure was embodied in the now famous Six Points. In summary the points were: the Government shall be parliamentary in form, at the center and in the provinces, governed by a directly elected legislature chosen on the basis of population by universal adult franchise, the central government shall be responsible only for defense and foreign affairs and, under certain conditions, currency, there shall be separate but freely convertible currencies for each wing, or, should a single currency be used there shall be means to prevent the transfer of resources from one wing to the other, fiscal policy will be vested in the provinces which, in turn, will provide "requisite resources" to the central government for it to

^{xxv}. Quoted in, Talukdar Maniruzzamn, *National Integration and Political Development*, Asian Survey, Vol VII, no. 12, December, p.800, Quoted by, Khawaja Alqama, *Bengali Elites Perceptions of Pakistan: The Road to Disillusionment Uneven Development of Ethnicity* (Karachi: Royal Book Company, 1997), p.223.

^{xxvi}. Quoted in Moudud Ahmed, pp.80-81, Quoted by, Khawaja Alqama, *Bengali Elites Perceptions of Pakistan: The Road to Disillusionments Uneven Development of Ethnicity*, p.223.

^{xxvii}. Charles Peter O'Donnell, *Bangladesh: Biography of A Muslim Nation* (London: West view, 1984), p.67.

^{xxviii}. Quoted in, Talukdar Maniruzzamn, *National Integration and Political Development*, Asian Survey, Vol VII, no. 12, December, p.800, Quoted by, Khawaja Alqama, *Bengali Elites Perceptions of Pakistan: The Road to Disillusionments Uneven Development of Ethnicity*, p.223.

^{xxix}. Quoted in, The Daily Ittefaq, Dacca, February 11, 1966., Quoted by, Khawaja Alqama, *Bengali Elites Perceptions of Pakistan: The Road to Disillusionments Uneven Development of Ethnicity*, p.224.

carry out its responsibilities in the defense and foreign affairs areas, separate accounts will be maintained for the foreign exchange earnings of each province and the provinces will provide foreign exchange as necessary to the central government in a similar manner as internal revenues are to be provided under point ,Each province shall be permitted to maintain a militia.^{xxx}

The third, fourth, and five of the Six Point Programme purely dealt with the economic issues of East Pakistan. The third point section demanded "Two separate but freely convertible currencies for two wings may be introduced and furthermore one currency for the whole country may be maintained. In this case effective constitutional provisions are to be made to stop flight of capital from East to West Pakistan. Separate Banking Reserve is to be made and separate fiscal and monetary policy to be adopted for East Pakistan".^{xxxI}

In the Formula he (Mujib) analyzed this aspect on the basis that Pakistan had two economic units, one in East and the other in West because of the distance between the two parts...there was no mobility of labor and capital between the two wings but the flight of capital could not be prevented due to the fact of having one currency.^{xxxII}

The West Pakistan was the centre of all important government offices. For example, the head office of the State Bank of Pakistan which was the main body of issuing currency, the head offices of the Central Bank (State Bank of Pakistan), the head offices of all public and private institutions and national and foreign industrial organizations were located in West Pakistan. Consequently, the transfer of money transactions from East to West wing was a natural thing.

All deposits of banks, all government resources, all earnings, profits and savings of trade and industry operating in East Pakistan would move in a matter of second to West Pakistan. Ninety per cent of the bank deposits or savings were generally invested and this investment was naturally done in West Pakistan and this was how the capital formation in West Pakistan was so rapid. The immediate benefit of investment i.e. employment and industrialization both were derived by West Pakistan.^{xxxIII}

Mujib suggested that the only way to save East Pakistan from an immense kind of economic exploitation from West Pakistan by creating a separate Reserve Bank for East Pakistan, capital investment could be generated in that region. This reform in the currency system, he maintained, would save East

^{xxx}. Quoted in Morning News (Dacca), June 8, 1970. Quoted by, David Dunbar, *Pakistan: The Failure of Political Negotiations*, Source: Asian Survey, Vol. 12, No. 5 (May, 1972), pp.444-461 Published by: University of California Press Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2643134> .Accessed: 11/08/201, Accessed at 04:09pm.

^{xxxI}. Saffdar Mehmood, *Pakistan Divided*, (Lahore: Institute of Islamic Culture, 1989), p.237-38.

^{xxxII}. Mujib further argued that there was no distinguishing mark to show the currency circulation wing-wise. There was one finance ministry situated in and operating from West Pakistan presided over always by a West Pakistani minister who formulated the financial, fiscal and money policies. For detail see, Moudud Ahmed, *Bangladesh: Constitutional Quest for Autonomy 1950-1971*, pp.80-81.

^{xxxIII}. *Ibid*, p.81.

Pakistan from economic deterioration and at the same time, keep currency a central subject as a symbol of unity and oneness of the people of Pakistan.^{xxxiv}

Muhammad Waseem narrates that it was indeed an exposition of the two-economy thesis. Given the absence of geographical contiguity which had resulted in relative immobility of labor and capital across the regional boundaries, already two different and wage structures had emerged in the country.^{xxxv} It was claimed that in all matters related to money transactions, the East Pakistan was neglected.^{xxxvi} The regional Reserve Banks were, thus, to act as a bulwark against this flight to capital from East Pakistan.^{xxxvii}

Syed Shahid Husain, in his book, 'What Was Once East Pakistan', is of the view that there was nothing wrong with this demand, because independent economists acknowledge that there had been a massive transfer of resources from East Pakistan to West Pakistan which was one of the causes of ill will between the two wings. He further says that asking for a separate currency did not mean to a call for secessionist movement. It was only intended to get guarantee that the non-transfer of resources from an under-developed region to one that was developed. All the people of the East Pakistan had a full legal right on their own resources. They were also entitled to get subsidies on the basis of being more economically violated and exploited than the West Pakistan.^{xxxviii}

The fourth point, "the power of taxation and revenue collection shall vest in the federating units and that the federal centre will have no such power. The federation will have a share in the state taxes for meeting their required expenditure. The consolidation Federal Fund shall come out of a levy of certain percentage of all state taxes".^{xxxix}

Mujib naively claimed that such an arrangement would make the federation rather stronger and that tax-collecting was a liability not a source of power.^{xl} Not surprisingly, this point attracted maximum criticism from what Mujib called the 'unitarierists' and 'pseudo-federalists'.^{xli}

Mujib was of the view,

^{xxxiv}. Ibid, p.81.

^{xxxv}. Muhammad Waseem, *Politics and the State in Pakistan*, p.283.

^{xxxvi}. Sheikh Mujiburrehman, '6 Point Formula—Our Right to Live, *The Bangladesh Papers: Why Did Pakistan Break? Who Was Responsible?*, p.27.

^{xxxvii}. Muhammad Waseem, *Politics and the State in Pakistan*, p.281.

^{xxxviii}. Syed Shahid Husain, *What Was Once East Pakistan* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp.24-25.

^{xxxix}. Safdar Mehmood, *Pakistan Divided*, p.238.

^{xl}. Sheikh Mujiburrehman, '6 Point Formula—Our Right to Live, *The Bangladesh Papers: Why Did Pakistan Break? Who Was Responsible?*, p.28.

^{xli}. Sheikh Mujiburrehman, '6 Point Formula—Our Right to Live, *The Bangladesh Papers: Why Did Pakistan Break? Who Was Responsible?*, p.28.

The central government would be constitutionally guaranteed of the required amount they needed. The right and power concerned did not rest in the act of tax collection but in the money so collected. The constitution would provide that 'a certain percentage of the revenue collection on all heads shall automatically be credited to the Federal Fund by the Reserve Banks on which amount the unit governments shall have no control.'^{XLII}

The demand was based on past experience of the federating units not being allocated their due share of the national resources. This too was an unexceptionable demand not inconsistent with greater autonomy.^{XLIII}

The fifth point of the Six Point Programme had sub five points: "There shall be two separate accounts for foreign exchange earnings of the two wings, earning of East Pakistan shall be under the control of East Pakistan Government and that of West Pakistan under the control of West Pakistan Government, foreign exchange requirement of the Federal Government shall be met by the two wings either equally or in a ratio to be fixed, indigenous products shall move free of duty between two wings, the constitution shall empower the unit Governments to establish trade and commercial relations with, set up trade missions in and enter into agreements with, foreign countries".^{XLIV}

Mujib proposals regarding fifth point were there to draw attention to the following facts such as the Eastern wing had earned a lot of the annual foreign exchange of Pakistan, East Pakistan's earnings had been used for the industrialization of West Pakistan and the earnings from those industries were again reinvested in that wing, East Pakistan's foreign earnings were not being used in that wing due to the non-availability of capital formation, imports to East Pakistan was less than as compared to her exports whereas imports to West Pakistan was more than her exports, two-thirds of Pakistan's foreign exchange earnings were made by jute which was the main cash crop of eastern wing, but those foreign earnings were used neither for the development of the jute growers or planters nor for the common people of East Pakistan and almost all the foreign aids and loans were taken against foreign exchange earned by Eastern wing; but they were used in Western wing. Moreover, the irony was that installments and interest on these loans were being paid by East Pakistan.^{XLV}

Moudud Ahmed further says that Mujib was of the view that oft-quoted economic inequalities were man-made inequities. He firmly believed that they were remediable. He suggested some remedies: Firstly, provision of employment at a very large scale for East Pakistanis through a systematic process of industrialization; secondly, check and balance of skyrocketed increasing inflation by the creation of equilibrium between the imports and exports and there by

^{XLII}. In order to enable the federal government of Pakistan to face a situation of war or emergency, some constitutional provisions would be made by empowering the federation to raise funds to tackle the increased defense expenditure at the time of conflict or war including the expansion of federal jurisdiction in such emergencies. For detail see, Moudud Ahmed, *Bangladesh: Constitutional Quest for Autonomy 1950-1971*, p.82.

^{XLIII}. Syed Shahid Husain, *What Was Once East Pakistan*, p.25.

^{XLIV}. Safdar Mehmood, *Pakistan Divided*, p.239.

^{XLV}. Moudud Ahmed, *Bangladesh: Constitutional Quest for Autonomy 1950-1971*, p.83.

availability of commodities to the common masses at minimum prices; thirdly, nationalization jute trade and thereby provision of good price to the planters and maximum share in the state's earnings in foreign exchange.^{XLVI} Muhammad Waseem points out that this demand sought to stop the Centre from spending East Pakistan's foreign exchange earnings in West Pakistan, as was the case in past.^{XLVII}

West Pakistanis and Six Point Programme

Mujib believed in sound confederation. He tried to convince the people of West Pakistan through his anti-thesis 'unity in diversity'. He proposed that 'only those subjects should be in the federal list which can be jointly managed more efficiently and profitably'.^{XLVIII}

Mujib put Six Point Programme before West Pakistanis in more simple and in appealing form. He addressed the people of West Pakistan precisely in the following line. Firstly, 'Six Points was not formulated in the interest of East Pakistan only. Secondly, 'Eastern wing wealth is being transferred to and concentrated in Western wing only meant regional imbalance. It did not mean that the common masses of West Pakistan receive this wealth. The entire wealth of the country was controlled by a few families. There are millions in West Pakistan like poor Bengalis who are also being exploited in the hands of these families. Thirdly, the capital of Pakistan had been located in Eastern wing instead of Western wing. This regional economic violation and exploitation would have occurred in the reverse way. The 62 per cent of our revenue that was being spent on our defence forces 32 per cent of our revenue that was being spent on our central administration would have been spent in East Pakistan instead of West Pakistan. This 94 per cent of the total revenue which was annually spent in West Pakistan forming its income would have spent in and enriched East Pakistan.

All the spending of the headquarters of armed forces, central institutions and foreign missions would have been in East Pakistan had the seat of the government been there'. Fourthly, 'if the situation was reverse and the seat of the government was in East Pakistan, even if East Pakistanis were the majority they would have done everything to make West Pakistanis feel that the country belonged to the people of East Pakistan as well as West Pakistan, both in thought and in action. The state power would have been shared equally. Mujib asserted that 'this feeling of absolute equality, sense of inter-wing justice and impartiality is the very basis of Pakistani patriotism'. Fifthly, 'whenever East Pakistan demanded something, it was considered to be a move to undo Pakistan. At the time of demanding Bengali as a state language or joint electorate or parity, East Pakistanis were blamed to have been inspired from across the border. All these demands were now accepted but without causing the undoing of Pakistan'. Sixthly, 'East Pakistanis, although being majority, always sacrificed for Pakistan both for its creation and for its preservation'.^{XLIX}

^{XLVI}. Ibid, p.83.

^{XLVII}. Muhammad Waseem, *Politics and the State in Pakistan*, p.281.

^{XLVIII}. Moudud Ahmed, *Bangladesh: Constitutional Quest for Autonomy 1950-1971*, p.84.

^{XLIX}. Ibid, p.85.

Syed Shahid Husain concludes that the West Pakistanis were not as politically conscious as the Bengalis and were led to believe that Mujib's Six Point Programme was actually an agenda of secession. This argument, on the one hand, deflects the blame from the real culprits and on the other, finds a convenient and acceptable scapegoat.^L Hasan Zaheer also describes the same view in these words that media and academic circles in the West Pakistan regarded the Six Points Programme as just a dangerous slogan. There appeared to be little understanding of the emergence of new biased factors which required a re-ordering of the well established system and a fresh national compact among the main federation units.^{L^I}

Ayub and Six Point Programme

Ayub immediate reaction was very hostile towards Six Point Programme. He was already dubious regarding the Bengalis character as he viewed them conspirers in the hands of traditional enemy of Pakistan (India). He adopted several coercive measures against Awami League leaders in order to keep them away from the politics of agitation on the basis of Six Point Programme.

Ayub called the formula a 'secessionist move' which would disintegrate Pakistan. The government took Six Point as a programme to divide Pakistan, the implementation of which would destroy the integrity and stability of Pakistan.^{L^{II}}

Ayub went on saying about Six Point Programme "it would spell disaster for the country and run the people of East Pakistan into slaves".^{L^{III}} He also threatened about the consequences of civil war between East Pakistan and West Pakistan. Moreover, his government used the tool of censorship and banned one of the leading newspapers of East Pakistan and time and again threatened Mujib when he was on the country tours in order to acquainted masses about the importance of Six Point Programme. Moudud Ahmed describes that *Ittefaq*, which was the main vernacular daily newspaper and it was working as the Awami League's mouthpiece for a very long time and championing the cause of the East Bengali Nationalist movement was banned by the government of Pakistan. Furthermore, its press was confiscated and its sole editor, Mr. Tofazzal Hossain, who was popularly known as Manik Mia was jailed.^{L^{IV}}

The Awami League was singled out as a party wanting to destroy Pakistan in the name of the Six Point Formula. When Mujib was touring East Pakistan explaining his formula to the people he was apprehended by the

^L. Syed Shahid Husain, *What Was Once East Pakistan*, p.21.

^{L^I}. Hasan Zaheer, *The Separation of East Pakistan: The Rise and Realization of Bengali Muslim Nationalism* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1994), p.146.

^{L^{II}}. As soon as the Six Points Formula was made public the whole government machinery was geared to dishonour Mujib ur Rehman and branded this Formula as the conspiracy of the enemies of the state. In a meeting with his own party (Convention) Muslim League in 'Dhaka March, 1966 General Ayub Khan warned that if necessary the government of Pakistan would use the 'Language of Weapon' against those elements who would talk of the Six Point Programme. For detail see, Moudud Ahmed, *Bangladesh: Constitutional Quest for Autonomy 1950-1971*, p.87.

^{L^{III}}. Salahuddin Ahmed, *Bangladesh: Past and Present*, p.160.

^{L^{IV}}. Moudud Ahmed, *Bangladesh: Constitutional Quest for Autonomy 1950-1971*, p.89.

government authorities on several occasions. In April, Mujib was arrested three times on the warrants issued by the Magistrates in Dhaka, Sylhet and Mymensingh. In the early morning of May 9 Mujib was finally arrested under Section 32 of the Defense of Pakistan Rules (Emergency provision for preventive detention imposed during the 1965 war) in the interest of security of state and maintenance of public order. This was followed by the arrest of several thousand Awami Leaguers including almost all the front-line leaders.^{LV} President Ayub Khan responded very furiously to the rising popularity of Six Point programme. He charged that the document amounted to a demand for complete independence from the 'Centre'. From the viewpoint of those who believed in the necessity of centralized government, he was correct, but he did not analyze that the position of the Six Point Programme was negotiable.^{LVI}

Yahya and Six Point Programme

General Yahya followed the policy of his predecessor regarding Six Point Programme and did not give a primary importance to this burning issue. In a very desperate bid to retain power and to validate his unprovoked attack on the East Pakistanis, he made his speech on 26 March, but all he could blame Mujib of was 'obstinacy, obduracy and refusal to talk sense'.^{LVII}

Here are some insights from Hamood-ur Rahman Commission Report about the Yahya casual attitude towards Six Point Programme. A retired Chief Justice of Pakistan who also served as a constitutional expert in Yahya's military regime, Justice A.R Cornelius, told the Hamood-ur-Rahman Commission, that he (Yahya) was familiar with them (Six Points) and he used to talk about them from time to time but he never asked for an analysis of these but according to my mind, I think that about four of them were quite easily acceptable and I said in a meeting of the cabinet that it would be easily possible to amend the Constitution so as to give effect to most of the Six Points and that would perhaps ease the political situation.^{LVIII}

Syed Shahid Husain narrates a very interesting event, On 6 January 1971, Lieutenant General Peerzda, the Principal Staff Officer to General Yahya, called on the Governor of East Pakistan, Admiral Ahsan, and asked him to obtain a copy of the Six Points Programme because he said that on the next day the President would be discussing it with Mujib Rehman and his colleagues. That at this stage the presidential team did not have so much as a copy of the Six Points Programme is in itself a shocking eye-opener.^{LIX} The failure on the part of Gen. Yahya Khan and his advisers to critically examine the Six Point of Sheikh Mujib ur Rahman and to permit the latter to campaign on the basis of his said Six Point Programme, declaring that the elections were actually a referendum on the Six Points, seems to

^{LV}. Ibid, p.89.

^{LVI}. Charles Peter O'Donnell, *Bangladesh: Biography of a Muslim Nation*, (London: West view, 1984), p.71.

^{LVII}. Syed Shahid Husain, *What Was Once East Pakistan*, p.21.

^{LVIII}. *The Report of the Hamood-ur-Rahman Commission of Inquiry into the 1971 War*, (Lahore: Vanguard Books, 2001), p.72.

^{LIX}. Quoted in, *The Report of the Hamood-ur-Rahman Commission of Inquiry into the 1971 War*, p.77. Quoted by, Syed Shahid Husain, *What Was Once East Pakistan*, p.23.

suggest that neither the General nor any one of his advisers was ever bothered about what the result of the election would be.^{LX}

The Commission concluded that the government's approach to Mujib's Six Points was off -hand. It also examined that Yahya was totally unprepared for talks with Mujib. On the other hand, Mujib was ready to negotiate as once he said that 'Six Points are not the words of God'.^{LXI} Privately, before election, Mujib was assuring Yahya that Six Points were his bargaining position'.^{LXII} However, Yahya regime tried level best to fan propaganda and encouraged to create an impression in both West and East Pakistan that the Six Point Programme was nothing, but an unjust plan to divide the country.

Hasan Zaheer concludes that the Six Points were never referred for official examination to bring out their full implication and to develop alternative proposals to accommodate Bengali demands within a viable federal structure. This had become necessary after the election, when they become the official policy of the majority party. Yahya did not clinch the issue when the Awami League leaders made a presentation of the Six Points to him in January. He had not briefed himself to ask the Bengali leaders informed and intelligent questions about the shape of the federation that would emerge from the implementation of thesis formula. Indeed, a day before these meetings, according to admiral Ahsan, Peerzda was searching for a copy of the Six Points. The Awami League, backed by professionals' economists, had issued detailed explanation of its programme from time to time and made light of the country through complete regional autonomy.^{LXIII} He further quotes that Umer recalls some vague and causal thinking about the Six Points: one point of view was not to discuss the Six Points in detail. Many people thought that Bengal was a liability. M.M. Ahmed, V. Jaffery, and perhaps Ghulam Ishaq Khan concluded that the acceptance of the Six Points Programme would be suicidal for national integration. But the subject matter was neither formally brought up for original consideration or discussion in the cabinet nor before the President.^{LXIV}

Bhutto and Six Point Programme

During the election campaign of 1970, Bhutto did not accept the Six Point Programme. He neither negotiated with Mujib, nor developed a critique. He did not also develop an alternative. But, on the other hand, the East Pakistanis had used first the rebellion of 1969 and then the elections of 1970 in order to popularize, and to make the substance of the Programme. So, the both sides which later came together on the negotiating table after the elections, in fact, came with vastly different an attitude which was less congenial.^{LXV}

^{LX}. *The Report of the Hamood-ur-Rahman Commission of Inquiry into the 1971 War*, p.343.

^{LXI}. Syed Shahid Husain, *What Was Once East Pakistan*, p.20.

^{LXII}. Hasan Zaheer, *The Separation of East Pakistan: The Rise and Realization of Bengali Muslim Nationalism*, p.127.

^{LXIII}. *Ibid.*, p.146.

^{LXIV}. *Ibid.*, pp.146-147.

^{LXV}. Review of *The Great Tragedy* by Zulfqar Ali Bhutto; September, 1971; Pakistan People Party Publication; 107 pages, Reviewed by Aijaz Ahmad, *The Great Farce*, Source: Pakistan Forum, Vol. 2,

The negotiations occurred in a vacuum. By 1971 the impulse in Bengal was not to consider the preservation of Pakistan's unity as a priority, the highest priority for the East Bengali leadership was to safeguard the distinct interests of their own region at all costs. They did not wish to break up Pakistan; a majority party had no reasons to do that. Nonetheless the continued existence of a unified Pakistan was subject, in the Bengali view, to the successful realization of the Bengali agendas. Their interests had been betrayed in the past, the ones who had betrayed them were still in power, there was no question of trust; future arrangements had to be guaranteed structurally. Bhutto told in a conversation that he had with one of Yahya's top advisors months before the negotiations; when this gentleman asked Bhutto what he thought Mujib's intentions were, Bhutto's unhesitating response came in one word 'separation'. In the Six-point Programme itself, Bhutto saw India's conspiratorial hand. Throughout the negotiations, Bhutto believed that the Awami League was moving in fact toward independence'.^{LXVI}

Salahuddin Ahmed points out a very interesting fact that in order to diffuse the appeal of the Six Point Programme, Bhutto wanted to influence Maulana Bhashani behind Mujib's back. He impressed upon the Maulana that the Six Point Programme had the backing of the American authorities in order to reduce the growing friendship between Pakistan and China.^{LXVII}

Bhutto criticized the Six- points Programme on the following grounds: Firstly, Provincial control of aid and trade, in addition to the Awami League's idea of separate currencies for the two provinces, would have meant separate and exclusive economies for the two Wings and would have turned Pakistan into a hotbed of 'imperialist intrigues'. Secondly, aid and trade are so bound up with Foreign Policy and Defense that the central government's control over those areas would have been undoubtedly impaired. Thirdly, new constitution cannot be unilaterally imposed by any one of the federating units, as Mujib wished to do with his draft based on the Six-points, but has to be acceptable to all the units in the federation, irrespective of their relative size.^{LXVIII}

On the burning issue of Six Point Programme, there were held some meetings between Bhutto and Mujib. On 27 January, 1971 Bhutto flew to Dacca with the following constitutional formula in order to find some common grounds regarding East Pakistan's economic grievances. Firstly, no separate currency for East Pakistan. Oppressive measures for checking the flight of capital from East to West Pakistan may be ensured. Secondly, Foreign trade being inextricably linked with foreign policy would be a core central subject. However, export earnings of each province may be deposited into the accounts of respective government to be opened in state Bank after deducting an agreed percentage for the central government.^{LXIX}

No. 6 (Mar., 1972), p.14. Published by: Middle East Research and Information Project Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2569045> .Accessed: 11/08/2011 04:08pm.

^{LXVI}. Ibid., p.14.

^{LXVII}. Salahuddin Ahmed, *Bangladesh: Past and Present*, p.160.

^{LXVIII}. Safdar Mehmood, *Pakistan Divided*, p.101

^{LXIX}. Ibid., p.102

In a closed door meeting on January 27, 1971, Mujib insisted on the full taxation power for the provinces and he also made clear that East Pakistan would contribute to defense budget in proportion to her representation in the armed forces. On the other hand, Bhutto opposed this idea and argued that it would not be acceptable to the army. Bhutto opines that the central government without these subjects would not be able to keep the two regions together. But, Mujib suggested the creation of a 'Revenue Allocation Committee' for determining the revenue share of the centre after it was raised by the provinces. Bhutto suggested the postponement of further discussion on this subject and the creation of two separate State Banks with one currency.^{LXX} Consequently, their meeting turned into fiasco because of their basic differences on international trade (foreign exchange), taxation, and international aid.

Awami League and Six Point Programme

Criticism on Six Point Programme was not only limited to General Ayub, Zulfqar Ali Bhutto, West Pakistan and East Pakistan political parties but it also faced criticism within the Awami League. Particularly, the West Pakistani members of the Awami League had some serious concerns against the programme.

In their criticism, the rightist elements called the Six Point Formula a communist and India-initiated programme aiming at destroying the 'Islamic State of Pakistan' and the leftists called it an imperialist design.^{LXXI}

The apprehension of the Six Point Programme was enough strong that it threatened the military-bureaucratic oligarchy in Islamabad, which was in fact the real ruling elite body in Pakistan since 1958. Muodud Ahmed describes the following reasons for this appalls: Firstly, 'point two of the formula, recommending only two subjects to the Central Government such as defense and foreign affairs which limited the scope of governance of the Central Government'. Secondly, 'point three it was to stop the height of capital from East Pakistan to West Pakistan; the ruling elite became gravely concerned at this, because, so long East Pakistani resources were used at will for the development of West Pakistan'. Thirdly, 'what appeared to be more menacing to the ruling elite was point four which proposed to hand over the taxing power to the federating units. Without this power the central Government would be reduced to a kind of post office'. Fourthly, 'along with that, point five, related to foreign exchange and inter-wing trade, and was viewed by the ruling elite with grave concern'.^{LXXII}

^{LXX}. Ibid., p.289.

^{LXXI}. One of the first persons to criticize the Six Point Programme was the party's national President, sir Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan and then followed by other West Pakistani prominent political leaders. This led to a clear division in the Awami League on a wing basis, most East Bengalis were supporting it and most West Pakistanis were opposing it. Consequently, he left his association with the Awami League and decided to open a new political forum. Eventually in May, 1967 he formed the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) and demanded mainly the restoration of democracy. They remained successful to receive support of few disgruntled members of the East Pakistan's Awami League such as Abdus Salam Khan and others. For detail see, Moudud Ahmed, *Bangladesh: Constitutional Quest for Autonomy 1950-1971*, p.88.

^{LXXII}. Ibid., pp.88-89.

Other Contemporary Political Parties and Six Point Programme

Not only the government but almost all the major political parties of West Pakistan and East Pakistan criticized the Six Point Formula. It created a storm of controversies and political arguments. It was called by opposition parties to protest against the Tashkent Declaration. According to an analyst, "this programme of Mujib was a covert scheme of separation. One noticeable aspect of this programme was that what was given by one hand in centre was taken aback by the other one".^{LXXIII}

The Council Muslim League called the programme 'nothing but the programme for the separation of East Pakistan. It was a demand for confederation and no federation? To them the Six Points were unacceptable as a basis for the future constitution of Pakistan. Jamat-i-Islami called the programme to have aimed at 'disintegrating Pakistan into pieces and making it an easy prey to Indian aggression, posing a direct threat to the existence of Pakistan.

The programme was a separatist design. The Nizam-i-Islam rejected the programme and blamed Mujib for his unilateral and dictatorial move. The National Awami Party (NAP) ignored the Six Point Programme on the ground that it did not provide any economic solution for the starving masses and it did not include 'any measure to free East Pakistan from the imperialist agents'.^{LXXIV}

Conclusion

¹. The critics of the Six Point Programme, more concerned with its political than its economic implications. Mujib's proposal for substantial control of the economy by the provinces gave birth to an irrational fear in West Pakistanis that the six-point plan would lead to the dismemberment of Pakistan by encouraging dissident tribal and linguistic groups in the west. In reality, Six Point Programme reflected some genuine East Bengali grievances and which were long standing demands of the East Pakistanis who were waiting for these fulfillments for decades. Mujib's movement proved to be a radical departure from the simple autonomy demand of the past. The Six Point Programme aimed towards a confederation, instead of a federation. The demand of full control on rising taxes and expenditure along with the freely convertible currencies and the power to enter into foreign trade relationships, keeping foreign exchange earning separate, was too much for the central government to accommodate. Neither any political party nor the central government of Pakistan gave any detailed explanation why they were opposed to the Six Points Programme.

^{LXXIII}. Waseem Gohar, *Did Bhutto Break Pakistan?*, (Lahore: Takhliqat Publication), p.173.

^{LXXIV}. Moudud Ahmed, *Constitutional Quest for Autonomy 1950-1971 Bangladesh*., pp.87-88.