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Challenges of Separatism in East Pakistan and Tamil Nadu: Comparative Appraisal of Political Leadership

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ABSTRACT

Separatist tendencies emerged in India and Pakistan even before the end of colonial rule in both countries in 1947. The political leadership of these states while dominating the political systems in their respective countries equally demonstrated much determination to curb the separatism. However their response to the challenge of separatist movements, particularly in Indian Tamil Nadu and Pakistani East Bengal, was different to each other. The outcome of separatist movements in two regions were altogether dissimilar. Indian leadership succeeded in repealing the Tamil Movement while Pakistani leadership fell short to the Bengali Movement. This paper is an attempt to expose that India and Pakistan both remained leader centred political systems during most of the time when they were confronted with the challenge of separatism in Tamil Movement it compares the responses of Indian and Pakistani leadership to the challenges in their relevant spheres. The measures adopted by the political leadership of these countries to appease these movements have been explored in comparison with each other. The dealing of language issue, central to the separatism in both cases, has been specially assessed for the comparative study of response to challenge of separatism.

Key Words: Separatist Movements, Leaders, Centralization, Autonomy, Language

Introduction

One of the most serious fissiparous tendencies which India had to contend was the Tamil Separatist Movement. Led first by the Dravida Kazagham (DK) and later by the Dravida Monnetra Kazhagam (DMK), the Movement advocated the secession of Tamilnad from the Indian Union and the creation of an independent and sovereign Dravidsthan. (Hardgrave, Jr., 1964-65, 396)Indian leadership, however, was able to cope with this challenge in the course of time.

Pakistan, the close neighbour of India, also faced the challenge to its unity in the form of a separatist movement in East Pakistan. Rounaq Jahan (1972) deems the separatism in East Pakistan as 'the most formidable problem' 'after the state's inception'. British High Commissioner in Pakistan (1956) viewed reconciling the aspirations of the two Wings of Pakistan as 'the chief one of all the problems faced by the country in the internal and political field.' Obviously, Pakistan whose political and economic structure was so unusual required for survival men of

exceptional qualities and statesmanship (Feldman, 2001, xiv)- the worthy leaders. In contrary the Movement started in 1947 for autonomous East Bengal converted into a separatist movement till 1971 when it was proved successful. East Pakistan was transformed into Bangladesh.

The seeds of separatism in Tamil Nadu existed when independence of India took place in 1947. The passions for separate Dravidian state were more mature at that time than Bengali separatist feelings in Pakistan were in the start. Dravida Nadu, a separate state for non-Brahmin Tamils, had been demanded till 1939 under the banner of Justice Party (South Indian Liberal Federation) that was founded in 1917. Under Naicker's leadership of Justice Party which was later renamed Dravida Kazhagam (DK), the party resolved that Tamilnad should be made a separate state, loyal to the British Raj and directly under the Secretary of State for India. (Hardgrave, Jr., 1964-65, 399) In July 1940 a secession committee was formed at the Dravidanadu Secession Conference held in Kanchipuram; in August 1944, the Tiruvarur Provincial Conference resolved that Dravidanadu should be a separate state (thani-naadu). The Justice Party in 1944 (merged with Self Respect League and DK) emerged. On July 1, 1947, the separatist Tamil leaders celebrated the Dravida Nadu Secession Day (Rajagopalan, 2001, 139) while on July 13, 1947 they passed a resolution in Tiruchirapalli demanding an independent Dravidistan. When India got freedom in August 1947, Tamil leader Periyar saw it as a sad event that marked the transfer of power to Aryans while Annadurai considered it as a step towards independent Dravida Nadu, and celebrated it. (www.wikipedia.org, 2009)Dr. Ian Talbot (2000, 180) views that the circumstances of 1947 foreclosed the establishment of Dravidistan as a realistic option. Naicker felt betrayed by the British and boycotted the Independence Day celebrations in 1947. Thus a stronger challenge in Dravidian Movement was confronted to Indians at the very moment of start of the Union life.

In the case of East Pakistan too "as early as 1948, the exclusion of popular Bengali leaders resulted in the growth of a sense of frustration among a section of Bengali Muslim leaders. This frustration was ultimately manifested in a 'fissiparous tendency' and provincial autonomy became an important theme in the politics of Pakistan almost from the day of its inception." (Kabir, 1980, 16, Dil&Dil, 2000, 75)

The idea of separatism in East Bengal originated in various proposals for different Muslim states in sub-continent, thus initiating a challenge of separatism even before the birth of Pakistan. Though it does not mean that the Bengalis were separatists in very start yet the broken threads of these preliminary proposals and ideas were later joined in order to make the ideological foundation of the separatism. The activists of the Bengali separatism afterwards took the points from such views in order to justify their claims for a separate Bengali identity. In the start these voices were weak and less important but with the passage of time they got momentum and gathered strong support of political parties as well as masses. The thoughts and assumptions for two or more Muslim states in India, the demand for autonomous, and in some cases separate Bengali state and the efforts for establishment of united Bengal provided an ideological base for the Separatist Movement in East Pakistan. These elements founded a great and unique challenge for the founding leaders of Pakistan who wanted the unity of Muslim majority areas as one state.

Cultural Issues and Separatist Movements

Tamil Movement in India and Bengali Movement in East Bengal both were akin to each other in the sense that cultural issues were one of fundamentals in the rise of separatism in both. Bengali Movement got support from the attachment of the Bengali people with their language. "The *Bhasha Ondolan*, the movement which campaigned for the use of Bengali in the domain of power in East Bengal and fought to make it one of the official languages of the state, alongside Urdu, was not merely, or predominantly, a linguistic one, it was a political campaign of the greatest significance for the new state. It was in fact East Bengal's first challenge to the hegemony of the Urdu speaking Bengali aristocracy and West Pakistani ruling elite." (Rahman, 1996, 79) The agitation of the Bengali students for Bangla language that started as early as December 1947(Rahman, 1996, 85) supplied a universally popular issue, a cause under which all Bengalis could unite, a cause which helped bridge the elite-mass gap. (Jahan, 1972, 43)

Likewise Tamil language was a source of attachment among the Tamil people. (Kohli, 1998,18) There was also the strong anti-Brahmin element which was always a key component of Tamil nationalism. Claims for a separate south Indian political entity have usually been expressed in terms of the validity of Tamil culture as opposed to north Indian Sanskritic culture. This claim implied the need to satisfy the aspirations of Tamil non-Brahmans and to promote the role that Tamil, both as a language and as a symbol, should play in regional affairs. (Irschick, 1969, 357) The use of economic issues for the political gains is a parallel between the Bengali and Tamil Movements. It was evident from the speeches of the leaders and manifestoes of the DMK that it focused its attention on the economic issues of the people of Tamil Nadu. The DMK used shortage of food for the political gains. (Palanithurai, 1993, 55)

Religion and Separatist Movements

Religion, as an instrument of conflict, was present in the development of Tamil Movement. One of Naicker's basic objectives was to remove all "superstitious belief" based upon religion and tradition. No member was allowed to wear the sectarian marks of faith across his forehead. Members were urged to boycott the use of Brahmin priests in ceremonies. The ceremonies and rites of passage at which Brahmins officiated came to be despised by the Dravida Kazagham, and the Hindu religion was denounced as an opiate by which the Brahmins had dulled the

masses so that they might be exploited and controlled. (Hardgrave, Jr., 1964-65, 399)

The Bengali Movement was disassociated from religion while the ruling leaders had been appealing to religious sentiments of the majority community for achieving integration. (Ahmad, 1970p. 164)The Bengali separatists denounced the use of religion Islam for the sake of continuous exploitation of the political and economic rights of the Bengalis. They refused to follow the ideological grounds which stressed upon bonds of unity between the two wings of Pakistan based on religion. They did not follow the contention of Quaid-i-Azam (1948) who viewed the measure to contest the conspiracy of separatism as well as the solution for the problem of geographical remoteness of East Pakistan from the West Pakistan was attachment with the 'faith' Islam. Instead of stressing upon Islam the Bengali separatists emphasized on the economic exploitations.

Issues of Civil & Military Bureaucracy

The dissatisfaction from the representation in bureaucracy and army in the East Pakistan was one of the major grievances of Bengali nationalists. Many provincial politicians from East Pakistan alleged that the central control of provincial administration through the civil servants had made a mockery of provincial autonom. (Sayeed, 1958)The discrimination of the bureaucrats to the Bengalis and the representation of Bengalis in civil bureaucracy are two factors which can be attributed to bureaucracy for laying the responsibility of rise of separatism on this institution. The conduct of the top civil officers in Pakistan generally and in East Pakistan especially was enough to call it a colonial bureaucracy. Thus there is some truth in Tarzie Vittachi's opinion that "Brown Sahibs" had been substituted for white ones. (Govine, 1966, 187)The discriminative conduct of a few topmost bureaucrats with Bengali political leaders and the Bengali people deteriorated the image of bureaucracy as well as Pakistan Government in the eyes of political minded Bengalis.

East Pakistanis did not like the army interference in the civilian affairs. Their dislike had already appeared at the time of "Operation Close Door" launched against smuggling in East Pakistan. The entry of the Military to power enhanced Bengali separatism. It was evident before the Martial Law of 1958 that the separatist movement in East Pakistan might strengthen due to martial law. The British diplomats were agreed on the point about Army rule in East Pakistan being in effect foreign rule and that if Iskandar Mirza, the President of Pakistan in 1958, and Army pursue pro-western policies "patriotic" Bengali opposition to "foreign" rule might well come to have a strong anti western flavour.(UKHC, 1958)

Such dissatisfaction from civil and military bureaucracy can be seen in Tamil Dravidian Movement as demand for communal quota of employment in State Services was one of two pillars (Anti-Brahmanism was the other one) on which the entire edifice of Dravidian Movement stood. (Sivatham by, 1993, 22)

Tools of the Movements

DMK used a unique medium of propagation of its ideas, Tamil film productions. This originated in stage plays by actors who subsequently moved into the cinema. A key element in the travelling productions was the alternative Dravidian reading of the Ramayana in which Ravana is the hero. This usage of dramas and films for the political purposes was innovation in contrast with other movements in the area including Bengali Movement.

The Tamil Dravidian Movement was increasingly supported by, among others, academics that played significant role in the development of Bengali Movement as well. In order to develop and preserve the Bengali cultural identity specially Bengali language through countering the activities of *Anjuman-i-Urdu*, that was functioning for the adoption of Urdu as state language, the professors and students of Dhaka University, founded on 1st September 1947, a militant cultural body called the 'Tamaddun Majlis' that initiated the Bengali language movement.(Choudhury, 2005, 31)Many Pakistani leaders considered that the Hindu teachers played basic role to develop Bengali nationalism. (Kirmani, 2009)

The affiliation of Hindu teachers and professors with Bengali Movement often raised allegations of their relations with India. In 1971 the students and intellectuals in India and other countries were organized and led by A. R.Malick, former VC of Chittagong University and Mazharul Islam, a professor of Bengali literature in Rajshahi University Justice Abu Sayeed Chowdhury, the former VC of Dhaka University, who was appointed the roving ambassador of the Government of Bangladesh, led the Movement on diplomatic front. (Bhuiyan, 1982, 198-203)

The Goals of the Movements

The Tamil Dravidian Movement changed from secessionist to the autonomist movement unlike the Bengali Movement that turned from autonomist to secessionist. During the 1950s and the 1960s, arguing that Tamils were a distinct people, Tamil leaders mobilized considerable support for a 'Tamil Nation'; they demanded, at the very least, greater power and control over their own affairs *vis-à-vis* New Delhi, or at most, secession from India. (Kohli, 1998, 17) After coming into provincial power in 1969 the DMK demanded autonomy in which Federal Government should have only powers relating to defence, foreign affairs, inter-State communication and currency. DMK provincial government declared its firm resolve to uphold the sovereignty and integrity of India. (Sivathamby, 1993,22) Sten Widmalm, quoting different activists of DMK, maintains that theme of the demand of separatist state prevailed in the early years of DMK. This demand for separate Dravida Nadu was formally dropped from DMK programme and today two major separatist parties DMK and ADMK demand only greater autonomy and not the separate state. (Widmalm, 1997, 127-131)

Bengali Movement can be divided into two definite periods regarding its goals. Though it is hard to draw a definite line between these two periods broadly speaking the first period starts in 1947 with the demand for maximum provincial autonomy (Morshed, 1988, 107) and ends in 1966 when with declaration of Six Points of Sheikh Mujibur Rehman, the leader of Awami League (AL), it shifted to the second one that ended in 1971 on the establishment of Bangladesh. The goal or ultimate demand of the first period was autonomy within the federation of Pakistan in all spheres except Defence and Foreign Affairs. The very first of the demands for autonomy for East Pakistan was made by the Parliamentary Party of East Pakistani branch of the ruling Pakistan Muslim League (PML), the East Pakistan Muslim League (EPML), which was considered to be vanguard of the unity of Pakistan. It at a meeting held on December 1949 resolved for full autonomy for East Pakistan. (Mirza, 1997,1) Later on this demand was taken up by the Bengali nationalist political parties like the parties composing the United Front (UF), AL and Krishak Saramik Party (KSP) etc. In the second period this demand was converted into a demand for larger autonomy in confederation of Pakistan, ultimate form of this demand went to the extent of complete separation which was achieved in December 1971.

The Response of Leadership to the Challenge of Separatism

To respond the Dravidian separatist movement Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India, used the tactics of co-opting, creating rival Tamil elite within the Congress and absorbing substantial parts of the DK's agenda. (Chadda, 1997, 81) Nehru's political style engaged regional leaders who were able to cultivate independent power bases. However, C. Rajagopalachari's educational reforms, the perception of neglect of South and the question of renaming Madras as Tamil Nadu after the reorganization of states in 1956 furthered the cause of the Dravida parties. (Rajagopalan, 2001, 152) The increasing Tamilian character of the Congress Ministry robbed the DMK of its claim to be the exclusive representative Tamil nationalism in Madras politics. In its effort to survive, the DMK, while still waving the symbolic banner of Dravidasthan, gradually had to begin to formulate demands representing a specificity of interest, together with a basic acceptance of constitutional procedures. (Hardgrave, Jr., 1964-65, 404)

The Pakistani leadership did not make any effort to absorb the agenda of Bengali Movement as was done by Indian leadership in case of Dravidian Movement. Neither could the ruling parties absorb the Bengali elements from 1947 to 1971. In the contrary in the first decade after Pakistan's birth finding no suitable political party to represent the Bengali ethnic ideas the former members of East Pakistan Communist Party, the dissident PML workers and students organized themselves in organizations which embodied the Bengali ethnicity and later worked as the separatist movement's tools. The activities of these semipolitical organizations posed initial challenge for Pakistani leadership and formed the first and initial period of the Bengali Movement. In the later period also the Bengali representative elements could not be properly absorbed in ruling political parties.

For the cooptation of Bengali leaders only the two main Bengali leading political groups led by FazlulHuq and Suhrawardy were appointed in central and political governments for a short period of year in 1954-55. Therefore UF's leader FazlulHuq went back from his earlier stand on separation and on July 23 1954, issued a statement regretting the remarks which he said he had made 'in an unguarded moment perhaps in exuberance' and forthwith announced his retirement from public life. (Mirza, 1997, 119) His nominee was inducted in the Central cabinet in January 1955. Later on 5 June 1955, on the restoration of the parliamentary government after the withdrawal of Section 92-A,(Chronology, 1955) a leader of his party Abu Hossain Sarkar was sworn in as the CM of East Pakistan who remained in office till September 1956 despite without a majority in the Assembly and without even placing the Budget before the house. (Mahmood, 1989, 21) In a spirit of compromise in July 1955, Sarkar announced the formation of a West Pakistan branch of KSP with headquarters at Karachi to be known as Kisan Mazdoor Party. (Dawn, 1955, July 18) Its twelve point program included demands which were supportive to United Pakistan with a touch of demand for maximum autonomy for federating units. Mutual understanding between KSP and Central leadership led to the formation of a coalition government under Chaudhuri Muhammad Ali on 10 August 1955 in which FazlulHaq was appointed interior minister. Both compromised their cherished principles. (Salamat, 1992,119)AL's leader Suhrawardy, on 21 December, 1954, was appointed a law minister in the 'cabinet of talents' which was sworn in when on 24 October1954; the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan (CAP) was dissolved. Later Suhrawardy was elevated to the premiership on 12 September 1956 and a leader of his party A. R. Khan became CM in East Pakistan. AL remained in Central as well as provincial government from September 1956 to October 1957.(Chronology, 1954; Chronology, 1956) Nazrul Islam (1990, 129) considers Suhrawardy's acceptance of ministry as a 'disastrous event' for the separatist movement.

When AL assumed government some great shocks to the Bengali nationalist movement were observed and the loss of its momentum became even more evident. (Maniruzzaman, 1975, 33) This was the only period in the history of East-West relations which was free from bitterness between the two Wings. On the government of Suhrawardy, outwardly, it seemed that the dissident Bengali leaders had at last got a chance to participate in the governance of the countr. (Rahman, 1979, 32-33) The contentious issues were frozen, and the Constitution 1956 was, more or less, accepted by Bengali public as the framework within which further remedy of their grievances would be sought. (Zaheer, 1994,45)

In later period the Pakistani ruling leaders missed many opportunities of compromise with the Bengali leaders. One of these occasions was soon after the presentation of Six Point Formula in 1966. Six Points were not formula of secession. Mujib categorically and repeatedly stated that the formula was

negotiable and amendable. However AL's stand gradually became rigid and uncompromising after the Elections.(Zaheer, 1994, 64 & 71)A compromise in start could be helpful for appeasement of the Bengali Movement.

Another occasion was that of negotiations in January and March 1971. The newspapers, all over the country, reported that the negotiations between AL and government team in January were successful and satisfactory. Yahya Khan agreed to accept most of the Six Points but insisted on modification of some. (Choudhury, 1973, 146 & 152; Bhutto, 1971, 20) For the March negotiations Rahman Subhan admitted that the government and AL negotiating teams did arrive at a mutually agreed formula on the last day of March negotiations. But when AL came to know that M. M. Ahmad and Justice Cornelius had been asked to fly back to Karachi they felt that the negotiations were a "side show." When asked about the last minute change of the word federation of Pakistan to confederation of Pakistan Rahman Subhan tried to gloss over it by saying "The formula was not changed. One did not have to go to war on the basis of one word."(Matinuddin, 1994, 203-04) Kamal Hossain asserts that their draft contained nothing new. It was only a clean copy incorporating the points discussed and agreed to up to that point, except for the term 'Confederation' which, he says, was negotiable between Yahya and Mujib.(Zaheer, 1994, 157) But the outcome of negotiations was not made favourable for Pakistan.

The ruling leaders also foiled the efforts of Bengali cooptation made on part of the opposition leaders. In September 1964 consensus of the leaders of diverse political parties of both wings in Combined Opposition Parties - Chaudhuri Muhammad Ali, Khawaja Nazimuddin, Maulana Bhashani, Nawabzada Nasrullah and Sheikh Mujib - on the leadership of Fatima Jinnah as presidential candidate even in the presence of Khawaja Nazimuddin, Choudhri Mohammad Ali and General Azam (Ahmad, 2003, 152) reflected that her personality could strengthen links between the two wings. But her defeat in the presidential elections of January 1965 made the Bengali leaders more discontented.

At another time the opposition became an area of link between the political forces of Pakistan when Suhrawardy's view was materialized and on 4 October 1962, 54 prominent leaders of Pakistan formed a broad National Democratic Front (NDF) including AL, CML, NAP, KSP, NI and JI. (Zaheer, 1994, 82; Talukdar, 1987, 176-77 & 207)The effort for national integration of Pakistan at the level of the contacts and links of opposition in the alliance NDF were totally undermined when Suhrawardy died on 5 December1963.

Again in early 1968 NAP, that joined the leftist elements of West Pakistan and East Pakistan together and had been a platform that kept Bhashani faction in mainstream politics of Pakistan through an alliance with the autonomists of West Pakistan split into two factions corresponding a rift in the international Communist Movement; Pro Beijing faction of Bhashani and Pro Moscow faction of Wali Khan. Both followed different directions in the politics of country also. Wali Khan inclined to join PDM while Bhashani calling it reactionary left it and PDM lost any national character without the presence of Mujib and Bhashani who represented the mainstream East Pakistani politics.(Zaheer, 1994, 98; Rashiduzzaman, 1970, 399-401) This development separated opposition on the issue of autonomy for East Pakistan from the struggle for autonomy continued in West Pakistan. Division in NAP also broke last mass national party which had leaders equally acknowledged in both wings. There was only the issue of restoration of democracy on which all opposition of both wings could unite.

To bring DMK in Indian fold a constitutional tactic, which was enforced generally for all separatist forces who could use election politics to fulfil their agenda, proved very useful. In 1963, on the recommendation of the Committee on National Integration Council, the Indian parliament unanimously passed the Sixteenth Amendment to the Constitution, which sought to "prevent the fissiparous, secessionist tendency in the country engendered by regional and linguistic loyalties and to preserve the unity, sovereignty, and territorial integrity" of India. This was essentially in response to the separatist movement demanding a sovereign Dravidistan. (Connor, 27) The DMK, possibly because of this and more directly because of its victory in 1967 state elections in the result of its success in spearheading an anti-Hindi agitation, officially gave up the idea of Dravidistan and joined other regional parties in pledging allegiance to New Delhi. (Chadda, 1997, 81)

The division in Dravidian Movement happened in the very start in prepartition India. In 1949 one faction of DK under Annandurai separated and formed DMK. This division did not weaken the separatism. From 1954 to 1963 DMK put emphasis, more than the DK did, on Dravidian ideals, and advocated the secession of Dravida Nadu. (Widmalm, 1997, 127-131) But strong democratic institution of election, and Indian leadership's close attachment with it, forced Dravidian parties to form alliances with non Tamil parties, a practice which helped to 'domesticate' separatism.

Palanithurai, with the analysis of the election alliances of Tamil party DMK with Congress and their joint endeavor to sideline Communists, observes that trend of alliance with non Tamil parties and inter Tamil Parties conflict made the job easier for the central authority to bring the ethnic groups under its fold by coopting their interests in the rubric of national political parties. This accommodation mellowed down the voices of the ethnic political parties. (Palanithurai, 1993, 63) The election politics forced DMK to adopt and drop different issues considering the popular mood andso long as the DMK espoused full independence, it was not able to make much headway with the public in the state. (Chadda, 1997, 81) Sezhiyan, a prominent DMK leader stated that it was impossible to continue to demand Dravida Nadu when the policy lacked support even in the Tamil-speaking areas, let alone Kannada, Telugu and Malayalam-speaking areas. (Widmalm, 1997, 127-128)

The founding party of the country in India Congress, like PML in East Pakistan in 1954, had to suffer in 1967 a stunning defeat at the polls and has never returned to power in the state of Tamil Nadu since. (Widmalm, 1997, 127-128)

The weakness of Central party, however, left impact on the separatist movement opposite to that the fall of ML left in East Pakistan. In Tamil Nadu the party which won the elections dropped the demand of complete secession and contented itself with the demand of autonomy within the framework of Indian Union. The victory of UF and after that the participation of the Bengali leaders in the power in East Pakistan also, though for the time being, forced Fazlul Haq to go back from his anti-Pakistan statements. Such opportunity of sharing in power that the Congress provided to Tamil parties after its fall in the state and that even Pakistanis provided in the period of 1954-57 could not be arranged for the Bengalis afterwards which became disastrous.

Indira's Congress, recognizing the power of this Movement and realizing that it could not deal with it by provoking defections and toppling the government, accepted the DMK's primacy in the state. In the January 1971 parliamentary elections, Mrs Gandhi's Congress accepted a minority of the seats in the state legislature in an arrangement with the DMK. In the result of this arrangement Karuananidhi, the new CM of DMK, could gain leverage in national politics. The future break up of DMK gave Indira a degree of leverage by playing the two fragments of DMK. Indira even did not hesitate to form an alliance with AIADMK in 1980. The arrangement endures until the present. (Chadda, 1997, 81-82)

The Response to Lingual Challenge

On language issue Indian leaders, though reluctantly, accepted the demands of the Dravidian Movement. They did not let the issue out of control. When DK appealed to burn the National flag of India on August 1, 1955 after the announcement that Hindi would be made the official language, the President of Union of India issued a statement that the Centre would not impose Hindi in the South. Again in 1959 when DMK resolved to launch an agitation against the President's plea for making Hindi as official language the Union Home Minister denied the charge and President himself declared that Hindi would never be imposed on anyone. (Palanithurai, 1993, 77)

The language in start was considered as a tool of separatism and a danger for the unity of the state by the leaders of India like those of Pakistan. The demands for the reorganization of Indian states on linguistic grounds, promised by Congress before partition, were dealt in this perspective. After partition, Nehru, considering language issue secondary to the security and stability to India in the wake of 'disruptionist tendencies' preferred to defer the creation of linguistic provinces. He seemed to have persuaded Gandhi also. Patel and Rajagopalachari supported this notion. JVP Committee – consisted of Nehru, Patel and another member – considered language a separating force and postponed the division of the provinces. Nehru's manoeuvrings and his chill public statements distancing himself from the linguistic provinces movement, together with his immense popularity and prestige and his command of Congress loyalties, combined to prevent action between 1947 and 1952.(King, 1997, 102, 110)

The renewal of movements in various Indian states besides Tamil Nadu aimed at linguistic autonomy¹ challenged the postponement. In 1952 the leaders – Nehru and Rajagopalachari – decided to create Andhra Pardesh, on the ground of Telgu language, reluctantly in the result of chaotic demonstration after the death of linguistic activist Sriramulu. Though leaders did not like the decision (Gopal, 1979, 259.) yet they, quite politically, suppressed their feeling but did not suppress the will of the people and resisting the public opinion did not adopt other measures like Pakistanis. Then under the decision of State Reorganisation Commission – formed by non-Congress people – the linguistic states were created. Nehru did not want it and there were also apprehensions among the nationalist leadership that it would lead to the Balkanization of India but the retreat of leaders before the public opinion and mass demand consolidated the unity of India as well as Congress party that won landslide in Andhra in 1958 where it had done disastrously in 1955. (Guha, 2007, 180-200)

The reorganisation of the states on linguistic grounds is an important milestone in the Centre's response to separatism in India. It had an adverse affect especially on the Dravidian Movement. Kohli (1998, 19) views the whole action in this way:

When pressed by several states, Nehru recalculated that the dangers of not developing power to linguistic groups were greater than those of doing so...Nehru set firm limits on what powers the newly constituted states would have and what would be controlled by New Delhi. Within these limits, then, India's federal system of states was reorganized along linguistic lines in 1956. By granting Tamil nationalists a Tamil state, the reorganization took a fair amount of the separatist steam out of the Movement.Now the struggle of Tamil nationalists shifted to ousting Congress from power within the state.

In Tamil Nadu the Indian leadership changed its stand of opposition to the language demand to one of accommodating it in some way. Most indicative perhaps of the Congress's radical transformation through its dealings with the Hindi question is Rajagopalachari's changing stance. The chief promoter of Hindi who made its study mandatory in the late 1930s in the Madras Presidency, he began to insist "English ever, Hindi never" from the late 1950s, and even made electoral deals with his Dravidian rivals by the 1960s. (Ramaswamy, 1998, 60)

¹Campaigns for 1- Samyukta (Greater) Karnataka aiming for unity of Kanada speaking regions. 2- Samyukta Maharashtra for uniting Marathi speakers, 3- Malayalis for merger of Cochin and Travancore with Maralbar, 4- Punjab for Sikhs 5- Andhra Pardesh for integrity of Telgu speakers (Guha, 2007,183-85)

In Nehru's later years the issue of Hindi as the national language became the most troublesome of linguistic issues. When the constitution was formulated a compromise had reached which recognised the major regional languages as national languages which would be officially used in their own areas, while Hindi was given the status both of a national language in the area where Hindi was spoken on a daily basis, and of the country's official language of the union and of communication between the states. Nehru disliked the trend towards a presumed purification and Sanskritisation of Hindi, which was linked, in his view, to a bigoted and narrow Hindu vision of India. He saw Hindi as a good working tool of communication throughout India, acting as a 'sister language' and functioning beside regional languages. However by the mid-1950s he was clearly aware of the strength of southern feeling about the future status of Hindi and recognised that the encouragement of Hindi throughout India would need great tact, while English would still play an important role as a link language. As the fifteen-year deadline drew closer there was overt hostility in the south to discontinuing the use of English as the country's official language, and Nehru spent much energy in trying to assuage southern fears. (Brown, 2003, 284)

Following Nehru's death, India's national leaders for a brief moment reattempted to impose Hindi as the national language on all states. Many states reacted negatively, but Tamil Nadu reacted most violently. For another brief spell, the national government used a heavy coercive hand to deal with protests. As matters got worse, the national government backtracked, conceding the principle that regional languages, such as Tamil, were 'co-equal' to the two national languages, namely Hindi and English.(Kohli, 1998, 20) The Congress president Kamaraj who was co-opted in the Party from Madras used his influence to cause Congress Working Committee finally recommend that the pace of Hindi-ization be slowed down that the three language formula – the use of English, Hindi and regional language in any state – be enforced in all states and the Nehru's assurances for accommodation of regional languages in competitive examinations be reaffirmed. (Forrester, 1966, 33)

The ruling leaders of Pakistan regarded Bengali as only a provincial language. They had decided that the lingua franca of Pakistan must be Urdu. Jinnah viewed that for official use of the province of Bengal the people's representatives could choose the language of their choice but only Urdu could be the lingua franca because, he thought, it embodied Islamic culture and Muslim tradition more than any other provincial language.(Jinnah, 1948 in Dil & Dil, 2000, 612-13) Khawaja Nazimuddin also saw no alternative to Urdu as the official language. He said that he would make a firm stand for Bengali as the provincial language of East Bengal and the medium of education in the province. (OPDOM, 1948) Likewise Sardar Nishtar, emphasizing "unity of language" as the "main foundation of a country" declared that "only Urdu, and not Arabic or any provincial language, could be the national language of Pakistan". (*Dawn*, 1951, April 14)

Pakistani leaders even opposed Bengali as one of the language of CAP. When a Hindu member of CAP, Dhirendranath Detta, in the first session of CAP on 23 February 1948,put a motion for the amendment in the Assembly rules to allow Bengali to be used in the House along with Urdu, PM Liaquat, Nazimuddin, Ghazanfar Ali Khan, Tamizuddin and others opposed it and it was consequently rejected by the house. (CAPD, 1959, 15-17)

Pakistani leaders considered the Bengali language agitation as arising from the activities of those who wanted to destruct Pakistan. Jinnah considered the language controversy a conspiracy of the enemies of Pakistan, Indian press and fifth columnists. Jinnah responded the 'effort of creating split' in Pakistan by warning the people to 'beware of' these disruptionists.(Dil & Dil, 2000, 612-13) He observed that every government worthy of the name must deal with such gangsterism firmly by all the means at its disposal. (Dil&Dil, 2000, p, 621) These views of Jinnah were followed by other leaders of the time. Khawaja Nazimuddin commented that under the cover of a seemingly genuine agitation there were some who wanted to disrupt the administrative machinery of the province with the interior motive of striking at the root of Pakistan.(Civil & Military Gazette, 1948, March 18).Nazimuddin regretted that the issue was raised in that form by members of the Congress. According to Governor Noon (1952), it was a conspiracy between the communists and some of the caste Hindus of Calcutta, and certain political elements in East Pakistan who wanted to replace the Ministry and the students were made the cat's paw. Noon took agitation as a blessing in disguise which had brought to surface the most dangerous and nefarious designs of the enemies, the Hindus who, according to Noon, spent quite a large amount of money in organising the whole show.

Pakistani leadership, (1947-52) though firm in dealing with disruptionists, tried to deal with the question politically, through discussions and compromise and during this process giving something and taking something. A compromise was made with SLCA before the visit of Jinnah in East Pakistan on 19 March 1948. Nazimuddin sought the help of Muhammad Ali Bogra to enter into negotiations with the SLCA. A committee of SLCA negotiated with Khawaja Nazimuddin and eight point Agreement was signed. The argument and all the terms of SLCA were incorporated in the eight point agreement mutually signed. The two main terms, along with other demands about the release of political prisoners, withdrawal of the ban on newspapers effected during the agitation, declaring the agitators 'patriotic', no victimisation for the participation in the agitation, and withdrawal of Section 144 from the districts, provided that the East Pakistan Assembly would adopt a resolution for making Bengali as the official language of East Pakistan and the medium of instruction at all stages of education; and the Assembly by another resolution would recommend to the central government that Bengali should be made one of the state languages.(Ahmad, 1970, 99; Mahmood, 1989, 9-10; Zaheer, 1994, 21-22)

The agreement resulted in the resolution making Bengali the official language of East Bengal after English and the medium of instruction in East Pakistan was

moved and passed by the Assembly, but the other one addressed to the Centre was not moved. Jinnah himself resorted to hold a meeting with SLCA in order to ease and convince the supporters of Bengali language, though, as Umar observes, the meeting turned out to be very bitter, and ended in a fiasco.(Zaheer, 1994, 21-22)

Political cooptation was also used to tackle the agitation. Governor Noon (1952a; 1952b) co-opted one MLA from Sylhet, Mr. Moinuddin Ahmad regarding the writing of the Bengali language in Arabic script. Four MLAs of Sylhet had joined hands with him.Some prominent leaders were removed from the political scene. Muhammad Ali Bogra and Tafazzal Ali were given ambassadorial jobs.(Afzal, 2002, 168)

The Working Committee meeting of the East Pakistan ML, by December 5, 1947, unanimously decided that Urdu would not be forced on the people of East Pakistan. Maulana Akram Khan, President of the East Pakistan ML, was directed to issue a press statement to this effect. (Dil&Dil, 2000, 443) The provincial leadership of ML, in the face of Bengali, embraced the idea of Arabic as national language. The provincial ML, in its council in January 1951, despite the opposition of councillors led by Hamid al-Haq Chowdhury who pleaded that a language could not be imposed on people, carried the motion supporting Arabic as the national language by forty-eight to thirty-six votes. (*Dawn*, 1951, January 22) Education Secretary of East Pakistan, F.A. Karim also gave suggestion which was adopted by the Central Minister for education Fazlur Rahman and Governor Noon.(Zaheer, 1994,24)

The Governor of East Pakistan thought that there was no way without accepting Bengali as one of the State languages. Therefore it must be accepted if written in the Arabic script. He believed that the Hindus would create the trouble but no Muslim could oppose the Arabic script. (Noon, 1952) Likewise thwarted in their attempt to make Arabic the national language, the '*ulema*' of East Pakistan launched a campaign for the introduction of *Pak Bangla*, a name given to Bengali written in the Arabic script. The intensity of this campaign can be judged from the remarks of a Bengali religious leader Maulana Ghulam Muhammad – who described the efforts to replace the Brahmani (devnagri) script of the Bengali language by the Arabic script "as a holy jihad". (*Dawn*, 1951, December 14)

Following the recommendations of an advisory Board of Education the central government established twenty one adult education centres in different parts of East Pakistan to teach primary Bengali through Arabic script. The East Bengal government also set up a Language Committee to carry out the Islamization of Bengali.(Rahman, 1996, 89)

On the language agitation 1952 rulers did not register the political implications and treated it as purely a law and order matter. And to meet it, an order banning processions within the limits of Dhaka city was issued under instructions of the provincial government (Zaheer, 1994, 25) Most of the language activists including Bhashani were arrested during the agitation. They remained under arrest for more than one year and were released after AL observed 17 April

1953 as a 'political prisoners' release day.' The student-activists of AL were expulsed from their education institutions.(UK Deputy HC Dhaka, 1953) The Governor East Pakistan was glad that the Government resisted the demand for a Police enquiry of the 21 February incident because the confidence of the Police Force and other officers was most essential. Governor hoped that the CM would hold his hand for appointment of a committee of enquiry demanded by PML until complete peace was restored. (Noon, 1952)

A counter campaign in favour of Urdu was promoted. The Governor East Pakistan patronized a movement to secure lakhs of signatures all over the province in support of Urdu started by JUI. (Noon, 1952) The activists led by the non political and non-governmental leaders like Maulvi Abdul Haq held the strike and demonstrations in Karachi on 22 April 1954. They marched to the CAP to demonstrate against the institution of any language other than Urdu. (Noon, 1952) The Minister of Education of Sindh Peer ElahiBux presided over the meeting of establishment of the Anjuman Urdu with the single objective of propagation of Urdu in the whole country. Peer Elahi Bux, Professor Haleem, Begum Habib-ur-Rehman, Muhammad Din Taseer, and Waqar Azeem were elected as the members of sub-committee to fulfil this objective.(Choudhury, 2005, 30)

The ruling leadership considered that their propaganda had been very weak, almost non-existent. The Government point of view had not had the chance to go before the public. (Noon, 1952) Governor Noon observed that Muslim Leaguers were doing nothing to educate the public opinion about language controversy while the Bengalis were starting their signature taking campaign for Bangla in contrast of that launched by Noon for Urdu. Noon had thousands of pamphlets (76000) had printed with the amount of Rs. 6050 (Noon, 1952b)to launch propaganda campaign through individuals.

Till 1952 the leaders looked reluctant in making Bengali a state language. Even decision in this regard was not made soon after 21 February and policy of postponement was adopted. Ruling ML member CAP Nur Ahmad was first allowed to bring the resolution regarding Bengali being one of the State Languages in the CAP, on April 10, 1952 then Government itself postponed it with the words "that there being no immediate necessity of taking a decision here and now."When Shaukat Hayat said that 'by postponing the issue, by postponing the evil day once again, we will be starting trouble which may result in the complete disruption of Pakistan" and advised to have the Bengali language as one of State languages' even A.K. Fazlul Huq supported the postponement of the issue because he wanted to have proper initiative. He did not want to lose and shelve the question but wanted to get an opportunity. Chattopadhya told that if Mr. Nurul Amin had moved that Resolution on the 20th the whole agitation would have fizzled out. There would have been no provocation for the agitation. He said it was a very urgent matter. The sooner it was decided the better so that people would not be back into the agitation but if it was postponed in this way without a final decision that would give cause for fresh agitation. (Dil&Dil, 2000, 652-61)

It was in May 1954 that Bengali was accepted as one of the state languages and credit of this goes to Muhammad Ali Bogra's leadership. Being the representative of Bengalis due to have been elected in the second CA from the constituency of East Pakistan, he supported the views of Bengalis for Bangla language. He viewed that it would be undemocratic to adopt a language against the will of the people.(*Times*, 1954, February 2)Bogra's action was directly executed in the name of the unity and solidarity of Pakistan and it was the purpose for which he appealed the support from the press and public opinion.(*Dawn*, 1954, May 8)

The chapter "Language of the Republic" was brought before the House by PM Bogra and accepted without any amendment. It read that the official languages of the Republic should be Urdu, Bengali and such other languages; Urdu and Bengali could be spoken in parliament in addition to English; and for examinations for the central services, all provincial languages should be placed on equal terms.(UKHC Karachi, 1954) The line Bogra adopted aroused opposition for him in West Pakistan.(UKHC Pakistan, 1954)Punjabi members of CAP except Shaukat Hayat absented from Assembly on presentation of the formula.

Almost all observers agree that there was no reason to keep the language issue unresolved for a long period. (Choudhury, 2005, 28)Rafique Afzal comments on the tackling of the language issue that the time chosen was inopportune and the method was un-statesman-like. The strength the supporters of Bengali, had gained by their constant and patient propaganda, after Jinnah's visit in 1948, was grossly underestimated.(Afzal, 2002, 173)Safdar Mahmood observed the language controversy was dragged on unnecessarily due to the unwise policy of the Centre. Once it had become clear that the demand was supported not only by the opposition but also by the party in power, the Central Government should have recognized the reality. (Mahmood, 1989, 11)Dr.Sajjad Hussain views that had the issues been explained to Bengali people and had a referendum been held even in early 1950 or 1951, the vote would have been overwhelmingly in favour of Urdu. The political leaders who were in power did not have the intelligence to grasp its real aims or anticipate its strategy, and proceeded to confront it either with incredible ineptitude or with concessions which fed the appetites they tried to appease. (Dil&Dil, 2000, 711 & 716) Hasan Zaheer (1994, 24) thinks if Urdu had not been insisted upon so vehemently, it was likely that in the natural course of events a common language, although with different scripts, would have been evolved.

If it was desired to re-orient the East Bengali culture the answer did not lie in using repressive measures. Muslim intellectuals could have been encouraged and supported financially to produce literary books of equal quality and with a greater Islamic tinge than those produced in Western Bengal and greedily devoured by the Muslims of East Bengal.(Matinuddin, 1994, 54-55) It was not proper to suppress and taunt the Bengalis on account of their cultural affiliations.

Conclusion

The Indian leadership adopted a variety of responses to separatist demands ranging from cooption to force. When the latter was resorted to it was a sign of political failure. Even in Punjab, the political process was restored and the politics of compromise, and cooption restored. Pakistan because of its weaker democratic institutions could not as a state deal so subtly with separatism as India. There was a more ready recourse to force and to encouraging polarisation leading from separatism to secessionist demands because separatists were not accorded legitimacy. Their demands instead were too easily treated as a law and order situation, rather than one for political solution, if only as so eloquently stated through procrastination. The Indian state's response to Tamil separatism was the most successful of any in South Asia and is a model of how potential secessionism can be handled by political responsiveness. Pakistani leaders failed

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