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Language, Identity Crisis, and Political Polarization: The Emergence and Rise of Bengali Resistance in the Formative Phase of Pakistan, 1947-54

Abstract

In diverse democratic nation-states, national cohesion and integration warrants due representation and tangible accommodation of all the ethnic and sub-national groups in national polity and decision-making. When it is other way around it usually weakened the state, loosened the process of national cohesion and integration, culminating into chaos and further political polarization. In this state of affair, the marginalized group opt to oppose the ruling elite through all available options for preserving their distinct identity and securing deserving status. The present study examines Bengali nationalist resistance in the formative phase in the political history of Pakistan from 1947 to 1954. As a newly established independent state, Pakistan faced deep political, economic and cultural differences between the Eastern and Western wing. The research will focus on how the policies adopted by the central government regarding national language, political representation and provincial autonomy generated discontent among Bengalis. The research also evaluates the influence of the Language Movement launched in 1952 by the Bengali intelligentsia and political forces that politically united Bengalis against centralized West Pakistani policies. This paper also explores that how the Bengali grievances surfaced at the initial stage provided ground for the emergence of Bengali nationalist resistance to the Western wing of Pakistan.

Key Words: nation-states, integration, sub-national groups, East Pakistan, political elite, ruling elite, Bengali language, resistance

Introduction

The initial seven years of Pakistan's history were characterized by intense political strife, social disintegration, fragile economy, and the rise of regionalism and provincialism that sparked unprecedented conflict between a centralized government and the ethnically diverse provinces. The ruling elite's dismissal of popular Bengali apprehensions and some of their legitimate demands regarding the Center's calculus propelled this trend in East Bengal. As a consequence, the Bengali political elite commenced opposing every action taken by the Central or Provincial government which sought to undermine their position regarding the Bengali language, provincial autonomy, and other constitutional and political issues. The Bengali resistance movement bears the hallmark of a constellation of factors that had shaped the politics of East Pakistan. This research is an evaluation

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of the astonishing rise of Bengali opposition to West Pakistan/Centre during the first seven years' post-independence. Thus, the study of the undying spirit of Bengali nationalism and its intricate relations with the state examines the causes, course, and ramifications of the enduring strains of resistance focused in this research. It begins with analysing the complex clash of the contradictory governing strategies of Pakistan and the Bengali political elite. An attempt is made to discuss language issue, constitutional and political crisis along with provincial autonomy were the main themes of political polarization in East Bengal during initial seven years. The present study is carried out with analytical and descriptive method. Kate L. Turabian's *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* is followed in this research.

Tracing the Ruptures

The creation of Pakistan was a unique experiment- creating a state, composed of two separate wings having overwhelming differences except religion.¹ Its integration, consolidation, national unity and harmony between the two geographically separated wings, posed gigantic challenge to its leadership. Bengali political elite was much aware of the existing contrast between the two wings. That contrast attracted publicity, by antagonistic and contradictory approaches adopted by the ruling elite of Pakistan and political elite.² According to Bengali member of the constituent assembly, the two wings of Pakistan vary in every aspect, except for two factors: firstly, they share a common religion, excluding a portion of the population in East Pakistan, secondly we attained our independence through a united struggle. Apart from these two aspects, every other factor—such as the language, tradition, culture, attire, customs, lexicon, calendar, and standard time—is different. In reality, the two wings share nothing in common, especially concerning the essential elements required to create a nation. It is truly not a single country, and we are forming one state from the two distinct countries.³

Thus, creating a common identity for two geographically separated wings was a sensitive matter for a politically nascent, economically fragile and socially fragmented state. The Islamic fervour germinated during the last stage of Pakistan Movement, had suddenly been disappeared. This created cleavage between secular and conservative political forces and caused emergence of tangible regional and subnational identities.

After the creation of Pakistan, politically conscious Bengalis seemed to be deeply associated with their language, culture and social matters. They were more concerned with their ethno-linguistic identities rather than the Islamic identity of Pakistan. In this regard Ziring rightly pointed out that the affiliation of Bengalis with their mother-tongue involves a passionate ritual that produces emotional experiences that could not be found in that part of the world.⁴ They were expecting that the creation of Pakistan would be a new dawn to ameliorate their social, economic and political grievances. According to a Bengali nationalist politician, Pakistan was created “on the voluntary association of the two wings” therefore, the people of East Bengal “voted for Pakistan for fear of the domination of the majority community of the then India: they voted on account of fear of exploitation and domination in the economic field”.⁵ Thus, the prime objective of Bengali Muslims was to protect their legitimate interests within Pakistan.⁶ They always stressed to have a parliamentary democratic system to represent and protect

their legitimate interest in a better way. For Bengali intelligentsia, apart from a common faith and believe system they should be “*bound to the Centre by palpable means including better living conditions and better employment opportunities in East Pakistan*”.⁷ Contrary to, the ruling authorities mainly focused on religion as binding force, than the “regions” and existing “realities”.⁸ Enriched by Persian and Arabic words and script, Urdu language was considered the yardstick for national integration. This exclusive and monolithic approach of identity creation advocated “the narrower (poorer) view, thereby antagonizing the emerging social forces in (East) Bengal”.⁹ Ziring opined that cultural homogeneity in East Bengal demonstrated the “intention of Bengalis to form a nation based on peculiar culture and historic heritage”.¹⁰ A political scientist characterized the perpetual dichotomy between the two wings with West Pakistan as “governmental” and East Pakistan as “Political” entity.¹¹

Fault Lines: Policies of Muslim League

After the creation of Pakistan, landed and aristocratic elite started dominating Muslim League (ML). Within a limited time hubris of ML leadership emerged unparalleled. Above all, the party was being considered as a sacred cow and the sole custodian of Pakistan. At the very inception, this mentality of the League’s leadership, “put the Bengalis an unfortunate situation”.¹² They started comparing the party with the State. In 1950, PM Liaquat Ali Khan while addressing to the ML Council meeting stated. My conviction, as I have said before, is that the League’s strength lies in the existence and strength of Pakistan, not only the existence of the League. So far as I am concerned, I had decided at the very beginning, as I reconfirm today, that I have always regarded myself as the Prime Minister of the League. I never considered myself the Prime Minister elected by the members of the Constituent Assembly.¹³

Infuriated over Bengali demands, at one stage Prime Minister (PM) Liaquat Ali Khan commented very negatively about Suhrawardy and labelled him as Indian agent.¹⁴ He also criticized Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bashani and Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and declared their political activities as nefarious to national integration.¹⁵ Owing to this approach the provincial loyalties started superseding the religious ideology and national outlook of the country.

As Suhrawardy tried to eliminate the communal outlook of ML, he confronted bitter arguments with its leaders.¹⁶ Subsequently, East Pakistan Muslim League (EPML) was reorganized: Hashim-Suhrawardy group was replaced with conservative landowning elite who were supported by Central ML.¹⁷ Moreover, Suhrawardy was accused of attempting to reunite both (East and West) Bengal, therefore, was banned to enter in East Bengal.¹⁸ In 1949, he was barred to attend Constituent Assembly (CA) session, pretending that he was no more citizen of Pakistan.¹⁹ This approach of barring popular Bengali leadership of national stature from decision making process who contributed a lot in the crucial phase of Pakistan Movement proved injurious for the national cohesion and integration in the long-run.

Suhrawardy group was considered by Bengali public as their real representatives. The move of changing leadership caused conflict and factionalism within East Pakistan Muslim League.²⁰ Furthermore, the dissident faction was side-lined, and their membership was restricted.²¹ As Abul Mansur

Ahmed called it, “not only a political blunders, but also a moral and political offense”.²² It is argued that ML had been operating on such lines that it “made too many enemies in East Bengal”. Its policies added to Bengali perception that they were being ruled by the civil servants.²³ That was how ML failed to win first by-election held in Tangal, in 1949, which demonstrated Bengali reactionary opposition against ML.²⁴ Nonetheless, the barring policy was castigated by Bengali leaders and proved counterproductive.

In June 1949, the dissidents from EPML created Awami Muslim League (AML) as a “regionalist opposition group”.²⁵ In the opinion of Bhuyian, the creation of AML was the outcome of “frustration caused by the closed-door policy of Muslim League”.²⁶ The aim behind the creation of AML was to “challenge the authority of ML in East Bengal”. Later on, the word ‘Muslim’ was dropped to be a representative party of all the communities in East Bengal. AL succeeded greatly in attracting the masses in East Bengal but failed to be recognized in West Pakistan. It exploited the language issue as a test case for its politics and demonstrated itself as a sole custodian of East Bengal’s interest.²⁷ Precisely, within a short time, policies adopted by ML proved ruinous and suicidal to its utter annihilation in East Bengal.

Issue of *Lingua Franca*

At the time of independence Urdu was spoken and understood almost by 7% population of Pakistan. For Bengalis Urdu was difficult to understand which further complicated the simple issues at various levels. Even the money order forms that printed in Urdu were found difficult to be filled by the educated Bengalis.²⁸ The ruling authorities had already decided to declare Urdu as national language of the country. In November 1947, first All Pakistan Educational Conference took place in Karachi to reform the existing education system by aligning it with “Islamic Ideology”. The Bengali delegates rejected the proposal for making Urdu as the single national language of Pakistan.²⁹

After achieving independence, Bengali leadership wanted recognition of their peculiar socio-political, cultural and linguistic identities. Bengali language was the largest spoken language of more than 55% of Pakistan’s population. Therefore, at the very first session of Constituent Assembly a Bengali Hindu member moved a motion to make Bengali as national language of the country. He pleaded that “Bengali is a provincial language ...and the language of the majority of the people of the state Therefore, the national language of Pakistan should be the language which is spoken by the majority of the people, and for that purpose, I consider that Bengali language is a *lingua franca* of our State”.³⁰ Moreover, he raised issues caused by the language barrier and argued that Bengali should have an “honoured place and treated as the language of the state”.³¹ Motion was endorsed by another Bengali member stating that “Bengali must find a place as one of the media in which the members can address Assembly”.³² As a sensitive matter it needed to be tackled with utmost care, but it appeared as a highly suspicious matter to the ruling authorities of Pakistan.³³ Needlessly, PM Liaquat Ali Khan out-rightly rejected the move and characterised it as an deliberate effort to generate misperception between the people of two wings of Pakistan. He unequivocally declared that the purpose behind the creation of Pakistan was the demand of more than hundred million Muslims, and the language of such large

numbers of Muslims is Urdu, therefore, Pakistan, being a Muslim nation, should have its common language reflect the identity of the Muslim community. While declining the motion, PM sarcastically stated that “as long as English was the official Language, it never pressed for Bengalis”. He added that it was a need of a country to have only one language and that language should be Urdu; no other language can be suitable for this. PM strongly condemned the move and referred its objectives as creating a split between the people of two wings of Pakistan.... and to take away that very unifying force that brought the Muslims of India together.³⁴

Bhupendra Kumar Dutta stated that the PM words “will have unfortunate repercussion...in certain sections in Pakistan”. He complained that “Urdu is the language of a small number of people from west Pakistan. Thus, the opposition proves a determined effort on the part of a few west Pakistanis to dominate the State of Pakistan”. He therefore, claimed that the Bengalis are in “disadvantage in every manner” thereby the capital should be in the majority province.³⁵ Shaista Suhrawardy Ikramullah jumped into the matter and revealed the growing Bengali feelings that they were “being neglected and treated as a ‘colony’ of West Pakistan”. She proposed that once a year, meeting of the Constituent Assembly to be held in East Bengal.³⁶ Her proposal confronted her with PM who stated that “women never realize the difficulties” and declared it a wrong idea.³⁷ The PM’s reaction to Dutta’s proposal was widely published in East Bengal. It was a crucial stage because there was a due visit of Jinnah to East Bengal. Therefore, the opportunity was cashed by the anti-Pakistani elements in creating hysteria among Bengalis.³⁸ It is argued that the Urdu question was a cash grant in the hands of Bengali political forces against the government.³⁹

The confrontation over language left very far reaching repercussions on the overall power structure and political discourse in East Pakistan. ML leadership’s stance was perceived by Bengali political elite as an attack on their ethnicity, identity and culture.⁴⁰ This led to emergence of Bengali perception that their cultural outlook was being considered as unmatched with Islamic characteristics.⁴¹ That is how Bengali opposition leaders set the tone for the politics of “us versus them” (Bengali versus West Pakistani).⁴²

With this background, the language issue emerged as the main subject of political theatre in East Bengal. In February 1948, Dacca University students demanded that Bengali to be declared as one of the state languages of Pakistan. They protested violently and confronted with the police culminating into death of three students.⁴³ The casualties exasperated the students’ political bodies, who started propagating anti-government activities within the academic institutions. At the firing site a *Shaheed Minar* was built for commemorating and propagating anti-West Pakistan feelings among the students and intelligentsia.⁴⁴ Not only the opposition but the members of ML also condemned the incident. Ironically, the governor of East Bengal labelled the language issue as a conspiracy of multiple characteristics including Hindus, Communist and Muslim dissidents.⁴⁵

In this politically charged and frenzied environment, on 20th March 1948, Jinnah visited Eastern wing of the country. Till that time the language issue had emerged as a boiling question. During his stay in East Bengal, on various occasions, Jinnah explicitly announced that Urdu would be the only National

Language of Pakistan. While addressing to the Convocation of Dhaka University, he made it quite clear that the official language ought to be Urdu—a language nurtured by one hundred million Muslims of the subcontinent. A language encompasses the vastness of Pakistan and, crucially, a language that embodies the finest aspects of Islamic culture and Muslim heritage, and is similar to the languages spoken in other Islamic countries.⁴⁶

It is opined that the purpose of Jinnah's explicit assertion was to counter the language movement.⁴⁷ In response, the State Language Committee of Action (SLCA) was established to raise voice in more vibrant manner.⁴⁸ To endorse the demands more effectively, East Bengal Muslim Student League was established.⁴⁹ This unfolding situation suited well to political opponents who were seeking opportunity to "create split among the Muslims" by inciting "hatred against non-Bengali Muslims".⁵⁰ It was revealed that the "students were being exploited to create a situation" in favour of opposition.⁵¹ Language controversy sponsored "the idea of creating East Bengal as a state with the power to secede". It was observed that the "idea of separate East Bengal state is taking hold of the young mind of Bengali Students" and their "silly demands" would lead to anarchic state.⁵² Jinnah was proposed to replace non-Muslim heads of the institutions with Muslims.⁵³ He also received a memorandum from SLCA: to oppose any act that would lead "to change their mother tongue". They proposed that more than one languages could be declared as national languages. They claimed that Bengali as a language of majority enriched with more than fifty percent vocabulary from the Persian and Arabic languages.⁵⁴ The memorandum condemned and characterized the oppressive measures of the provincial government as tantamount to the colonial rule.⁵⁵

The declaration of Urdu as national language was comprehended by Bengali intelligentsia as being subjugated by West Pakistanis.⁵⁶ Jinnah himself admitted that the people from East Bengal feel getting isolated from the rest of the country.⁵⁷ He pointed out the emerging provincialism as "one of the curses" which impedes national integration and warned that soon it "becomes a vicious circle". Jinnah emotionally appealed that if Pakistanis want to become a strong and united nation, "*for God's sake give up parochialism and provincialism*".⁵⁸ Liaquat Ali Khan also recognised emerging Provincialism and condemned it by stating that provincialism must be eliminated once for all. As long as we keep this demon alive your state will remain weak and you cannot afford a weak State.⁵⁹ Basically, Khan strongly believed that being driven by the Hindu agendas, Bengalis' demands contradicting to the ideology of Pakistan. He made it clear that the religious ideology would not be undermined on the demands of Hindu leaders who wanted that Pakistan should go beyond religious identities.⁶⁰ After Jinnah's demise, pro-language political activism helped in significantly moulding the Bengali opposition into coherent and unified force.⁶¹ Now practical difficulties at the national level started superseding by emerging provincialism.

Within a limited time, the language issue attracted members of the provincial assembly, students, Bengali intelligentsia and civil servants. East Bengal Student League emerged as the frontrunner of language movement.⁶² When Urdu speaking students boycotted the strikes and the agitational means, ethnic clashes erupted in East Bengal.⁶³ Furthermore, Bengali press endorsed the language question. Even

the newspapers owned by ML members supported the language cause.⁶⁴ Consequently, declaration of Urdu as a sole national language isolated Bengalis and “crystallized Bengali nationalism”.⁶⁵

The ruling elite conceived Bengali as a “Hindu Language” and hesitated to accept it as one of the state Languages of Pakistan.⁶⁶ Fazlur Rahman, the education minister presented the idea of Islamizing the Bengali language by introducing Arabic script. It was a bitter pill for pro-active Bengalis to swallow, which culminated into demonstrations in the rank and file of East Bengal.⁶⁷ Bengalis considered the decision as an attempt “to halt the growth of Bengali as a vibrant language”.⁶⁸

The national anthem having overwhelmingly Persian words was composed in 1948. It was highly difficult for Bengalis, even for the educated elite to understand it. Therefore, during public and private function, Bengali people sang the national anthem in Bengali written by Nazir Ahmed i.e. “*Pakistan Zindabad ...purabo Banglar Shayamolimai* (in the green of East Bengal)”.⁶⁹ These tendencies added to the language movement and “helped foster a kind of linguistic nationalism”.⁷⁰ It also created a kind of “dissension and disharmony in the civil service of East Bengal”.⁷¹ Some of the government officials supported the movement whole heartedly. They strongly believed that nations do not tolerate attempts to degrade the mother tongue.⁷² In 1955, during a visit to East Pakistan, PM Muhammad Ali had to face difficult situation as he tried to address in Urdu. He was criticized and made responsible for the exploitation of East Bengal.⁷³

The language issue served as the main subject of confrontation between Bengali opposition and the ruling elite. As far as the issue was alive, it undermined the political and constitutional development and contributed to misunderstanding and shaping Bengali opposition on separatist lines. However, Bengali language was accepted as one of the national languages in the first constitution that was promulgated on 23 March 1956. Thus, it took almost nine years to give Bengali language its deserving status. This delay greatly contributed to damaging the process of national integration and cohesion between East and West Pakistan.

Conclusion

During first seven years Muslim League (the sole force behind the creation of Pakistan) failed to learn lesson and to get benefits from its own history of political struggle. Thus, in initial years’ parliamentary politics set ground for political confrontation between ruling elite and Bengali political forces. The supercilious elite ruled the country in such a manner that they inherited the right to rule and it was beyond any criticism and opposition. They overlooked some genuine grievances and legitimate demands along with peculiar cultural and social matters of Bengalis. In this regard the ideology and Urdu language was unnecessarily overemphasized when it came to national integration and identity creation. Out of this monolithic approach adopted by the ruling elite, the genie of staunch Bengali opposition movement—blended-with-separatist-resistance to West Pakistan came out to surface and could never be put back in the bottle. The ruling elite always reluctant to consider dark-skinned Bengalis as potential and equal citizen of Pakistan. This maltreatment gave birth to a strong Bengali separatist opposition movement set forth on the aspirations of Bengali political elite.

The ruling elite of Pakistan was strongly convinced and focused that a strong Centre and common religion would be adequate for national integration. Contrary to, politically conscious and democratic minded Bengali leadership focused and operated on such lines which could end economic disparity and ensure provincial autonomy. In this case Bengali language issue precipitated the emerging conflicts and set the confrontational and agitational political course in East Pakistan. Nationalist forces like AL and NAP exploited the poor isolated and frustrated Bengalis in launching opposition movement on radical lines. The language issue greatly affected the constitutional and political developments and added to existing misconception and trust-deficit between the people of the two wings. The emergence of Bengali resistance as a potential threat to national cohesion and integration was the outcome of various policies connected with the internal political development of Pakistan during late 1940s and early 1950s. Thus, after the creation of Pakistan in August 1947, within a short span of seven years, ML was wiped out from East Bengal where it was established half a century ago. Subsequently, it set the political course for mutual confrontation and antagonism that left deep imprints on the relations between the two wings of Pakistan in the next phase.

References

¹ Pakistan was as a sovereign country was comprised of two geographically and culturally separated areas: East Pakistan and West Pakistan. The two wings were divided by approximately 1,600 km and had very little in common linguistically, culturally, or ethnically. East Pakistan contained the majority of the country's population, who were predominantly ethnic Bengalis with rich literary and cultural traditions. West Pakistan was composed of a number of ethnic groups such as Punjabis, Pashtuns, Sindhis, and Baloch, and the national language was touted as Urdu, which was the mother tongue of only a small minority.

²In November 1947, All Pakistan Educational Conference was held in Karachi to reform the educational system. The Bengali delegates opposed the proposal regarding Urdu as the only national language of Pakistan. In 1949, when Suhrawardy came to Karachi for attending the Constituent Assembly (CA) session, his membership was cancelled on the pretext that he was no more the citizen of Pakistan. Ironically, unlike him, a Hindu member of CA, who was still living in Calcutta, was allowed to have membership. Mohammad H.R. Talukdar, ed., *Memoirs of Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy: With a Brief Account of his Life and Work* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2009), 36.

³Abul Mansur Ahmad's speech in the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan, 16 January 1956, in *Constituent Assembly (Legislature) of Pakistan Debate*, 1816.

⁴Lawrence Ziring, *Bangladesh from Mujib to Ershad: an Interpretive Study* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1992), 4.

⁵Ataur Rahman Khan's speech in the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan, 19 March, 1956, in, *The Constituent Assembly (Legislature) of Pakistan Debates*, 214.

⁶G. W. Choudhury, *The Last Days of United Pakistan* (London: C. Hurst & Company, 1974), 5.

⁷Khalid Bin Sayeed, *Pakistan: The Formative Phase 1857-1948* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1968), 276.

⁸Choudhury, *The Last Days of United Pakistan*, 7.

⁹K.B. Sayeed, *Politics in Pakistan: The Nature and Direction of Change* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1980), 67.

¹⁰Ziring, *Bangladesh*, 2.

¹¹Rounaq Jahan, *Pakistan: Failure in National Integration* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972), 20.

¹²Choudhury, *The Last Days of United Pakistan*, 5.

¹³Cited in, Shaikh Mujibur Rahman, *The Unfinished Memoirs* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2012), 144.

¹⁴Rahman, *The Unfinished Memoirs*, 144. See also, Talukdar, ed., *Memoirs of Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy*, 40.

¹⁵Talukdar, ed., *Memoirs of Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy*, 40.

¹⁶Afzal, *Political Parties in Pakistan 1947-1958, Vol. I*, 63-64.

¹⁷After the creation of Pakistan, elections were held for the leadership of East Bengal Muslim League in which Khawaja Nazimuddin group who had support from the centre emerged as the dominant group and he himself became the chief minister of East Bengal, while Suhrawardy group was side-lined.

¹⁸Talukdar, ed., *Memoirs of Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy*, 35.

¹⁹Talukdar, ed., *Memoirs of Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy*, 36.

²⁰Sayeed, *Politics in Pakistan*, 66. According to Mujib Due to its popularity in the masses, and its role in the united independent Bengal scheme, Suhrawardy group earned highly sceptic reputation in the lines of ML, which led to his exclusion from its council. Rahman, *The Unfinished Memoirs*, 96-97.

²¹Rafique Afzal, *Political Parties in Pakistan 1947-1958, Vol. I*, (Islamabad: National Institute of Historical and Cultural Research, 1998), 126.

²² Anwar Dil and Afia Dil, *Bengali Language Movement to Bangladesh* (Lahore: Ferozsons, 2000), 79.

²³ K. K. Aziz, *Party Politics in Pakistan 1947-1958* (Islamabad: National Commission on Historical and Cultural Research, 19760), 15.

²⁴ Badruddin Umar, *The Emergence of Bangladesh: Class Struggle in East Pakistan (1947-1958)* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2004), 93-98. See also. M. Bhaskaran Nair, *Politics in Bangladesh: A Study of Awami League, 1949- 1958* (New Delhi: Northern Book Centre, 1990), 57.

²⁵ The failing of ML was owing to its inability to move out of the role of opposition from that of the spokesman of the Muslims of the subcontinent into that of a national party taking up the task of national unity of various regional interests into a well-integrated nation-state. Hasan Zaheer, *The Separation of East Pakistan: The Rise and Realization of Bengali Muslim Nationalism* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1994), 17-18.

²⁶ Abdul Wadud Bhuiyan, *Emergence of Bangladesh and Role of Awami League* (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House Pvt Ltd, 1982), 23.

²⁷ Zaheer, *The Separation of East Pakistan*, 7.

²⁸ Dharendra Nath Dutta's speech in the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan on, 25 February 1948, in the *Constituent Assembly of Pakistan Debates, Official Report*, Vol. II, No. 2, 16.

²⁹ Zaheer, *The Separation of East Pakistan*, 21.

³⁰ Dharendra Nath Dutta's speech in the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan on February 25 1948, in the *Constituent Assembly of Pakistan Debates, Official Report*, Vol. II, No. 2, 15.

³¹ Dharendra Nath Dutta's speech in the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan on February 25 1948, in the *Constituent Assembly of Pakistan Debates, Official Report*, Vol. II, No. 2, 16.

³² Prem Hari Barma's speech in the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan on February 25, 1948, *Constituent Assembly of Pakistan Debates, Official Report*, Vol. II, No. 2, 16.

³³ Richard Sisson and Leo E. Rose, *War and Secession: Pakistan India and the Creation of Bangladesh* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1992), 9

³⁴ Liaquat Ali Khan's speech in the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan, 25 February 1948, *Constituent Assembly of Pakistan Debates, Official Report*, Vol. II, No. 2, 17.

³⁵ Bhupendra Kumar Dutta's objection to Liaquat Ali Khan remarks in the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan, 25 February 1948, *Constituent Assembly of Pakistan Debates, Official Report*, Vol. II, No. 2, 18.

³⁶ Begum Ikramullah's Maiden Speech and Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan's Reply, 24th February 1948, Appendix 1, in Shista Suhrawardy Ikramullah, *From Purdah to Parliament* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2004), 228. See also, Raj Kumar Chakraverty's speech in the Constitutional Assembly of Pakistan, 24 February 1948, in *Constituent Assembly of Pakistan Debates, Official Report*, Vol. II, No. 2, 5-6.

³⁷ *Constituent Assembly of Pakistan (Legislature) Debates*, 229-230.

³⁸ Dil and Dil, *Bengali Language Movement to Bangladesh*, 82.

³⁹ Memorandum on the Political Scene in East Bengal, written by Charles H. Derry American Consul-General in Pakistan to George Marshal the Secretary of State of US, in Roedad Khan, *The British Papers: Secret and Confidential India, Pakistan, Bangladesh Documents 1958-1969* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2002), 224.

⁴⁰ Sufia. M. Uddin, *Constructing Bangladesh: Religion, Ethnicity and Language in an Islamic Nation* (New Delhi: Vistaar Publications, 2006), 120-1.

⁴¹ Uddin, *Constructing Bangladesh: Religion, Ethnicity and Language in an Islamic Nation*, 119.

⁴² It is interesting to know that Bengali political leaders usually referred all the West Pakistani as Punjabis. One of the reasons was that Punjabi were in majority in West Pakistan and were in dominant position. In this way whenever Bengali leaders strived for mobilizing public opinion, they presented Punjabis as symbol of exploitation.

⁴³Zaheer, *The Separation of East Pakistan*, 26.

⁴⁴Zaheer, *The Separation of East Pakistan*, 27.

⁴⁵Zaheer, *The Separation of East Pakistan*, 26.

⁴⁶Draft of the Address by M. A. Jinnah to the Convocation at Dacca University on 24th March 1948, in Zaidi (ed.), *Jinnah Papers*, Vol. VII, 274.

⁴⁷Farooq Ahmad Dar, *Jinnah's Pakistan: Formation and Challenges of a State* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2014), 213. According to Mujibur Rahman who was present at the Race Course ground Convocation Centre, Jinnah had to face opposition from some of the students. In the words of Mujib "some four or five hundred students sitting in one corner....Many of us (students) raised our hands in protest and shouted No No No". Rahman, *The Unfinished Memoirs*, 104.

⁴⁸Umar, *The Emergence of Bangladesh*, 32-33.

⁴⁹Rahman, *The Unfinished Memoirs*, 93.

⁵⁰Zaidi ed., *Jinnah Papers*, Vol. VII, 274.

⁵¹When in 1948, Jinnah visited East Bengal he received a letter from Syed Karimuddin, the principle of Sirajganj College. In letter Karimuddin wrote that the students, who were demonstrating and observing protest for Bengali Language, actually were being exploited by the separatist forces for their nefarious designs. He made some useful suggestion to Jinnah regarding the political situation of the province. Syed Karimuddin to M. A. Jinnah, 20th March 1948, in Zaidi ed., *Jinnah Papers*, Vol. VII, 218.

⁵²Zaidi ed., *Jinnah Papers*, Vol. VII, 218.

⁵³Zaidi ed., *Jinnah Papers*, Vol. VII, 219.

⁵⁴Memorandum by Joint State Language Committee of Action to Jinnah, 24th March 1948, Zaidi ed., *Jinnah Papers*, Vol. VII, 277.

⁵⁵Zaidi ed., *Jinnah Papers*, Vol. VII, 278. See also, Rahman, *The Unfinished Memoirs*, 167.

⁵⁶Badruddin Ahmad's Booklet entitled *East Bengal's Immediate Danger* to Jinnah, in Zaidi ed., *Jinnah Papers*, Vol. VII, 209.

⁵⁷Jinnah's speech at a public meeting at Dacca, 21 March 1948, in Zaidi ed., *Jinnah Papers*, Vol. VII, 235.

⁵⁸Zaidi ed., *Jinnah Papers*, Vol. VII, 232-233.

⁵⁹Liaquat Ali Khan's speech in the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan, 2 March 1948, in *Constituent Assembly (Legislature) of Pakistan Debate*, Vol. I, No, 8, 141.

⁶⁰Liaquat Ali Khan's speech in the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan, 6 March 1948, in *Constituent Assembly (Legislature) of Pakistan Debate*, Vol. I, No, 8, 129.

⁶¹Jahan, *Pakistan*, 41.

⁶²Zaheer, *The Separation of East Pakistan*, 21.

⁶³Zaheer, *The Separation of East Pakistan* 25.

⁶⁴Umar, *The Emergence of Bangladesh*, 31-32.

⁶⁵Zaring, *Bangladesh*, 15.

⁶⁶Hasan Askari Rizvi, *Internal Strife and External Intervention* (Lahore: Progressive publishers, 1981), 77. The exponent of Urdu in West Pakistan labelled Bengali as being saturated with the Hindu culture and unsuitable for national language in Pakistan. G. W. Choudhury, *Constitutional Development in Pakistan* (London: Longman, 1969), 125.

⁶⁷Uddin, *Constructing Bangladesh*, 125, see also. Dil and Dil, *Bengali Language Movement to Bangladesh*, 85.

⁶⁸Salahuddin Ahmed, *Bangladesh: Past and present* (New Delhi: A.P.H. Publishing Corporation, 2004), 136.

⁶⁹Dil and Dil, *Bengali Language Movement to Bangladesh*, 82,

⁷⁰Jahan, *Pakistan*, 43.

⁷¹Nair, *Politics in Bangladesh*, 56.

⁷²Rahman, *The Unfinished Memoirs*, 103-104.

⁷³Dil and Dil, *Bengali Language Movement to Bangladesh*, 95.