Chapter-2

Idea of Pakistan and Road to Bangladesh

Introduction

In this chapter I have analyzed the defining moments of history that led to the construction of Pakistan and in less than a quarter of a century its dismemberment, proving right the prophetic statement of Admiral Mountbatten who during a conversation with Mr. C Rajagopalacharya conveyed his apprehension that ‘Pakistan is unlikely to survive more than 25 years in its present form’¹. I have tried to get answer to the moot question as to why a nation state named Pakistan, which was constructed on the foundation of religion, succumb in its very nascent stage? Also I searched for an answer to a very relevant question: reasons for Bengali Muslims supporting the idea of Pakistan despite the fact except for religion nothing was common between the two wings; even geographically they were not conjoined.

Starting from 712 AD with the invasion of Sind by Muhammad Bin Qasim, Muslims came in waves as conquerors. Therefore, Muslims and Hindus of Indian sub-continent have different historical experiences which shaped their views and destiny too. More than thousand years, Hindus and Muslims of India have mixed but never fused, as they retained their distinctiveness. British after observing this contrast heightened the differences further to their advantage². Based on Macaulay’s advice³, English education was introduced in India and in 1835, and English became the official language for government business replacing Persian. Hindus studied in English medium schools whereas majority of the Muslims did not participate. Aloofness from English education impacted heavily on the Muslim community: they lost advantages both material and social which other sections of the society enjoyed.

Bengali Muslims were so apathetic to modern education that Hooghly College, founded in 1836 by the philanthropist Haji Mohammad Mohsin had only five Muslim students out of a total of 409 as late as 1850.⁴
Growth of Muslim Separatism
After the Battle of Plassey, and with the advent of British rule, Muslims lost their preeminent commanding position in the societal structure. Most important factor, that had maximum impact on the Bengali Muslims, is that of Lord Cornwallis’s administrative decision about land settlement and revenue collection in 1793-94 which spawned the Zamindari system in Bengal. The economic and social ramifications of this decision had far reaching impact, ultimately manifesting itself in the emergence of Bangladesh. A great limitation of nineteenth century renaissance of Bengal encompassing intellectual, economic and political movements was its inability to attract the Muslims and lower - caste Hindus. Upper-crust Muslims became extinct and people belonging to Muslim community could not take the economic and political advantage which British rule offered. Hindu Bengalis grabbed majority of the government jobs, and other professions like medicine, engineering, judicial and teaching etc. as the Muslims denied themselves English education. “Slowly they withdrew themselves in to cocoon” and during that period, Bengali Hindus benefitted because of their monopoly in all of these fields. “The general characteristics of civil society in Bengal during this period was of Hindus being dominant, acquisitive and exploitative and the Muslims being the deprived the exploited and devoid of any significant role in the power structure ……”The trauma of their changed position in the society from belonging to the ruling class of India to being collectively suspected and neglected made the Muslims of Bengal insecure and insular. Understanding this predicament of Muslims in Bengal is necessary to comprehend why a major portion of them became advocates of the two-nation theory and of the partition of India.”

Noticeably, such deplorable conditions as in Bengal were not faced by the Muslims in other parts of the subcontinent. Sir William Hunter, an ICS officer while describing condition prevailing in lower Bengal province said, “The Muhammadans have suffered most severely under British rule….A hundred and seventy years ago, it was almost impossible for a well born Muslim in Bengal to become poor. At present it is almost impossible for him to continue rich.”

In 1867 when Hindus of India started an agitation for the replacement of official language Urdu with Hindi written in the Devnagri script, Sir Syed Ahmed of Aligarh said,
“I am convinced that the two communities will not sincerely cooperate in any work. Opposition and hatred between them which is felt so little today, will in the future be seen to increase on account of so called educated classes”.

His statement in context of partition is worth pondering. He established Aligarh College in 1874 and encouraged Muslims to opt for English education and also advised them to be loyal to British for the benefit of Muslim community. Syed Ahmed could influence Muslims of North India but for Bengali Muslims, this awakening only commenced when Syed Amir Ali chaired the first session of All India Muslim Educational Conference (AIMEC) in Calcutta in 1899. In fact credit for pioneering the modern education for Bengali Muslims is given to Nawab Abdul Latif of Faridpur based in Calcutta who founded the Muhammadan Literary Society in Calcutta in 1863. He believed that for upliftment of Muslim society, western education is a must. But he himself was a product of the madrassa system of education. Along with modern education, he upheld the old madrassa system of education and opposed its replacement. Thus two parallel systems of education were practiced in Bengal. Traditional madrassa system of education was fully based on a religious community. This exclusivity encouraged communal feelings amongst Muslims and was despised by Hindus. This further added to already existing social division.

In the meanwhile, British government who thus far favoured Hindus started suspecting them after 1857 great revolt and commenced leaning on to Muslim community which: Government Resolution in 1871 during the period of Governor General Lord Mayo, is a proof of change of British attitude towards Muslims.

Political orientation for the Muslim community was pioneered by Syed Amir Ali through the National Mohammadan Association founded in 1878. It was impressed upon that political empowerment of Muslims with adequate safeguards for the community can only save the community from subjugation by others. He received moral and financial support from lot of Hindu influential people. This was one of the rarest Muslim organizations where Hindus were co-opted: a great sign of Hindu-Muslim unity. Indian National Congress born in 1885 though was secular in character but had overtones of Hindu majority community. Actually here began political aspiration of upper and middle class Hindus. In the same year, Syed Ahmed formed Patriotic Association to oppose Congress. Bengali Muslims resorted to communal and religion identity based
politics since the dawn of twentieth century which resulted in division of Bengal in 1905 by Lord Curzon. Census result of 1881 showed that in Bengal, Muslims were numerically superior. Lord Curzon though said that the partition was meant for facilitating better administration, but historians have viewed sinister design behind it. It was basically a policy of ‘divide and rule’: an effort of balancing act between Hindus and Muslims which latter was rescinded in 1911 due to vehement opposition by both Muslims and Hindus, but majorly by Hindus. 11 Demographic pattern of the Indian subcontinent has been depicted with the two maps of 1909 vintage affixed below.

Map No. 1-Depicting Hindu Demographic Pattern in 1909
Nawab Sir Salimullah of Dacca, a Kashmiri descent Muslim, convened meeting of pan India Muslim leaders in December 1906 at Dacca and there Indian Muslim League was formed as a political platform for the Muslim community. It had three main objectives; promote among Muslims feeling of loyalty to the British, protect political rights and interests of Musalmans of India, and prevent rise of hostile feelings against other communities. Aim of this chapter is to recall some defining moments of history and not a detailed analyses of the partition history. One aspect needs mentioning is that Mr.Chitta Ranjan Das was possibly the only leader who commanded great respect from both Bengali Hindus and Muslims. To forge unity amongst the two communities, he drafted the historic Bengal Pact 1923. But C.R.Das passed away untimely on 16 June 1925; and with his death, once again Hindus and Muslims of Bengal drifted. After Chittaranjan’s death, in 1926, Bengal Pact was rejected both by Bengal Provincial Congress committee and also by Kakinada session of All India Congress. Mr.H.S.Suhrawardy and many other Muslim leaders who were lieutenants of Chittaranjan estranged as they felt betrayed. It spurned communalism. Frequency as well as magnitude of communal violence increased. “The much talked of composite culture of
Bengal gave way to the political stance of ‘Islam in danger ‘accepted by large sections of Bengal Muslims.” While analyzing the genesis of formation of Pakistan, one finds that the idea of a separate home land for Hindus and Muslims was hovering around in some form or other since the inception of the Muslim League in 1906 at Dacca. In 1930, the poet and philosopher Mohammed Alama Iqbal while arguing for a separate Muslim state remarked in his presidential address in Muslim League Annual Session at Allahabad that, ‘Formation of a consolidated North-West Indian Muslims state appears to be the final destiny of the Muslims at least of North –West India’.

Photo No.1

1930 IML meeting at Allahabad: Iqbal (fifth from the left)

It is interesting to note that Iqbal in his scheme of a Muslim State did not talk of a separate nation, also he did not mention Bengal (East Bengal) nor did Chaudhuri Rahamat Ali, and his fellow students of Cambridge University who inspired by Iqbal’s idea coined the word Pakistan an acronym to denote P for Punjab, A for Afghanistan, K for Kashmir, S for Sind and TAN for area of the undivided British India. Even 1940 Lahore Resolution (also known as Pakistan Resolution) moved by Mr. A K Fazlul Haq
was aimed at formation of autonomous states for Muslim majority areas of India but not amalgamation of these areas to form a separate country. Copy of the Lahore Resolution is in Appendix 1. Mr. Jinnah in this session mooted his idea of ‘two nation theory’ by making an emphatic statement that Hindus and Muslims belong to ---two different civilizations which are based mainly on conflicting ideas and conception.

**Photo No.2**

Photograph of leaders participating in Lahore Resolution 23 March, 1940

No one took the idea of Pakistan seriously. It was only in 1946, during the Muslim League Legislatures Convention held in Delhi, that there was official endorsement on the concept of a single state of Pakistan. As for as Bengal was concerned, “Last nail in the coffin of united Bengal was struck on 20 June 1946 when the Bengal Legislative Assembly voted for Pakistan”\(^{15}\). On 2\(^{nd}\) June 1947, in Delhi, when Mountbatten and seven other leaders finalized the partition which was publically announced on the next day, no Bengali leader was part of it. (See photograph in the next page).
Bengali Muslims supported the formation of Pakistan with the hope that upper crust will enjoy the power and the people from the level below will be free from the exploitation of Hindu Zamindars and money lenders. And paradoxically the Hindus who fought tooth and nail against 1905 division of Bengal supported the idea of another division because of their bitter experience between 1940 onwards. Current of politics engulfed all. The idea of Pakistan though by far did receive support of Bengali Muslims and their leaders but a few were skeptical about the shape of things the new nation Pakistan will become. One such tall leader was Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy whose letter dated 10 September 1946 addressed to Khaliquzzaman, an well-known Muslim League leader from North India--is a statement seeking rationale for Pakistan from the 'Bengali Muslims' point of view. Undercurrents of distances and differences between the leadership of East Pakistan and that of West Pakistan were visible in this letter. He criticized Md.Ali Jinnah and the leadership of Muslim League from Sindh, Punjab and UP for doing nothing to stabilize the polity of Pakistan on rationale basis.
About the country to be named ‘Pakistan’, Mohammad Ali Jinnah, the sole spokesperson for the Muslims of Indian subcontinent sold dreams to the brothers and sisters of the common faith ‘Islam’. Historian Ayesha Jalal brought out this phenomenon very succinctly. She observed that ‘The term Pakistan was put forth as the panacea for all problems facing Muslims. Its meaning was kept deliberately vague so that it could mean all things to all people’\textsuperscript{17}. Upper crust thought, the new state will give them great opportunity to occupy powerful positions and the lower strata of the society thought, their miseries will be alleviated: Pakistan will be a land of honey and milk. Geographical separation of thousand miles between East and West Pakistan, and diverse culture became no barrier because ‘commonality of faith’ thought to be sufficient to hold the nation together.

Though religion was considered as the bedrock of ‘Two Nations’ theory, however Mr. Jinnah was well aware of the importance of language and culture. For this reason, while negotiating geography of Pakistan, Jinnah claimed for whole of Bengal and Punjab and on denial argued with Mountbatten that, “Bengal and Punjab are indivisible and needs to be transferred as whole as the inhabitants saw them more as a linguistic and culturally homogeneous community than as a religious group. A man is a Punjabi or a Bengali first before he is a Hindu or Muslim. You must not partition them. You will destroy their viability and cause endless bloodshed and trouble.”\textsuperscript{18} Ultimately, Jinnah accepted division of both these states either out of assent or despair, though he termed the geography of this new country as ‘moth eaten Pakistan’. Ironically during finalization of that division on 2nd June 1947, among the seven leaders present, none was from Bengal\textsuperscript{19}. Possibly a few tall leaders of Bengal were then toying with the idea of ‘Greater Bengal’ so they were best avoided by the central Muslim League as well as Congress leadership: others might not have mattered. Formal decision on partition of India was announced by Admiral Mountbatten on 3\textsuperscript{rd} June 1947. To many, this partition literally meant Shakespeare’s quote “This was the unkindest cut of all.”\textsuperscript{20} Geography of India and Pakistan was hurriedly decided by Sir Radcliffe \textsuperscript{21}. Thus Pakistan was born on the premise that uniformity of religion will one day overcome the impediments created by the geographical separation and diversity of culture.
14 August 1947: Pakistan takes birth Jinnah becomes first Governor General of Pakistan In the photograph (left to right). Mr. Jinnah, Admiral Mountbatten, Lady Edwina Mountbatten and Ms. Fatima Jinnah, sister of Mr. Jinnah. This photograph dated 14th August 1947 was taken after Jinnah was sworn in as Governor General of Pakistan
Note-Pakistan is shown in green colour. POK (Pakistan Occupied Kashmir)

Pakistan tribals backed by Pakistan Army attacked few weeks after partition and occupied areas known as P.O.K.

Road from East Pakistan to Bangladesh.

Muhammad Ali Jinnah during his very first address to the constituent assembly on August 11, 1947 stated ‘you may belong to any religion or caste or creed—that has nothing to do with the business of state. We are starting with this fundamental principle that we are all citizens and equal citizens of one state’. Jinnah’s proclamation and
grandstanding notwithstanding, in the same year, during the national education summit in Karachi it was proposed that Urdu be the sole state language, and be used in the media and in schools. It was perceived that Urdu is more Islamic language and it will help to integrate the newly born nation. Pakistan Public Service Commission removed Bengali from the list of approved subjects. Bengali was also removed from currency notes, postal stamps, and government forms.

Pakistan became accident prone since its very birth. Evidences suggest that the leaders of Pakistan, who primarily belonged to West Pakistan, made every attempt to destroy it. And the first assault was on the Bengali language.

**Conflict of Culture**

Cultural conflict between the West and East Pakistan began with the language issue. Culture has been defined as ‘the total of the inherited ideas, beliefs, values and knowledge, which constitute the shared basis of social action; the total range of activities and ideas of a group of people with shared traditions, which are transmitted and reinforced by members of group’.

Culture entails various characteristics of a group to include language, arts, music, religion, cuisines, social habits, race, skin color, dressing norms, ancestry, education, profession, skill, political attitudes etc. Therefore, culture distinguishes the members of one category of people from another. Culture is an important factor in shaping identity. While analyzing cultural relativism it has been derived that though ‘different culture group think, feel and act differently, but there is no scientific standard for considering one group is intrinsically culturally superior to another’. In the instant case, it was well known that Pakistan was constructed on the bed rock of multi cultural societies. Despite that many west Pakistani civil servants would routinely refer to the Bengalis as ‘Bingo bastards’ or ‘black monkey’. Such comments reflect a degree of cultural insensitivity. It therefore needs to be explained; why despite Jinnah’s idea of equality for all, tenets of pluralism was violated since Pakistan commenced its journey.
Language Movement (Bhasa Andolon)

Public outrage spread over removal of Bengali language from the list of approved subjects and from government issued stationaries including notes and coins, and a large number of Bengali students met on the University of Dhaka campus on 8 December 1947 demanding Bengali to be made an official language. Abul Kasem, Secretary of Tamaddun Majlish, a Bengali Islamic Cultural Organization led the protest. Many prominent leaders voiced their concern over the language issue. Dr. M. Shahidullah may be credited with one of those pioneer protesters against making Urdu as national language of Pakistan. In fact language movement started before the partition when Dr. Shahidullah on learning that Urdu is being proposed to be made national language of Pakistan, protested by saying "that would tantamount to political slavery". Pakistan government's effort to impose Urdu went on unabated with crusaders zeal with the false hope that it will harmonize great Muslim values and unify the populace of two wings. On the contrary, this codification of uniform means of communication brought disharmony among the Bengalis comprising 55% of the Pakistan’s population. Mr. Dhirendra Nath Dutta moved a resolution in Pakistan’s National Assembly on 25 February 1948 to make Bengali a language of the constituent assembly along with Urdu and English. He said, "State language should be the language used by the majority of the people of the state and for that I consider that Bengali language is the lingua franca of our state." Prime Minister Liaquat Ali along with many prominent leaders from the West vehemently objected to this proposal. Liaquat Ali Khan argued that “Pakistan has been created on the demand of hundred million Muslims in the sub continent and the language of hundred million Muslims is Urdu. Pakistan is a Muslim state and it must have for its lingua franca, the language of the Muslim nation”. Table in the next page shows the distribution of various language groups in Pakistan as tabulated during the decennial census conducted in 1951.
Table No.1 Distribution of Various Language Groups in Pakistan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language Group</th>
<th>Percentage of Total Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bengali</td>
<td>54.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punjabi</td>
<td>28.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pushto</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urdu</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sindhi</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following two points challenge the opinion above. Firstly, hundred million Muslims of pre-partitioned India spoke many different languages and not Urdu. Secondly, only 2.5% in East Pakistan and 7% population of West Pakistan spoke Urdu. When the language agitation was gaining momentum, ironically to make the matter worse, on 22nd March 1948 Md. Ali Jinnah in his speech at Dhaka declared that the state language of Pakistan is going to be ‘Urdu and not any other language’\(^{31}\). Hearing it from the horse’s mouth was a big blow to the Bengali Muslims. Agitation on the language issue continued in various forums. And a broad based All Party Committee was formed under the Chairmanship of Maulana Bhashani. Amongst Bengalis, language impasse brought in a sense of despair and betrayal. On 21st February 1952, five young men were gunned down in Dhaka by the police for protesting against imposition of Urdu and demanding Bengali as one of the national languages. Abdul Gaffar Choudhury composed soul stirring and much inspiring lyric "Amar bhaiyer rakte rangano ekushey February, Ami ki bhulite pari?"\(^{32}\)(Can I forget twenty first February incaradined by the blood of my brother?). It captured hearts and minds of the Bengalis: it was the most celebrated song then. Language movement gave birth to regional nationalism. During this period much of creative literature blossomed which helped in spreading socio-cultural and political consciousness. Language movement also brought many political parties and various groups under one platform with a common cause for protest. Agitation continued with indomitable spirit. But instead of handling it deftly, in 1955, the establishment to add salt to the injury, renamed East Bengal ‘East Pakistan’: the land synonymous with their mother tongue lost its distinctive identity of nomenclature through cultural aggression.
Abdul Mansur Ahmad, an East Pakistani who had participated in the 1956 constitutional debates in the Constituent Assembly, had made a strong statement on the distinctiveness of East Pakistan, and the differences between East and West Pakistan:

“Pakistan is a unique country having two wings which are separated by a distance of more than a thousand miles….these two wings differ in all matters, except common religion ....the language, the tradition, the culture, the costume, the custom, the dietary, the calendar, the standard time, practically everything is different. There is, in fact, nothing common in the two wings, particularly in respect to those [things] which are the sine qua non to form a nation” 33. Language movement came to an end in 1956 when constitutional provision was made through Article 214, (1) recognizing Bengali and Urdu as state language.

One of the characteristics of cultural identity is ‘race’. West Pakistanis perceived themselves racially superior and looked down upon the Bengalis as a non martial race. Bengalis were seen not only socially inferior but also lesser Muslims because they did not adhere to the many of the cultural practices that North Indian Muslims considered properly Islamic. Ayub Khan felt that Bengalis have been and are still under considerable Hindu cultural and linguistic influence and once again in 1969 tried to push Urdu as the sole national language of Pakistan.34 Pakistani establishment failed to realize that to the Bengalis, a common religious identity that was shared with other Pakistanis had never meant that they were to be denied their own cultural traditions. “Most Bengalis, initially, did not see any contradictions in being a Bengali, a Muslim and a Pakistani all at the same time. The contradiction was to be perceived with other Pakistanis”35.

Bengali script was derived from Sanskrit (Brahmi). Central government in their attempt to de Sanskritize Bengali language, undertook a programme to teach Bengali through Arabic script. Students of University of Dhaka protested vehemently. A programme was also undertaken to tamper with the existing works of poets and writers by substituting Bengali words with Arabic words. The proposed centenary celebration of Rabindra Nath Tagore in 1961 was opposed by the Pakistan Government through its mouthpiece newspaper, Azad. A series of vilifying articles condemning Tagore’s ideals as anti Pakistan appeared in the paper. In 1961 during the centenary celebration of the birth of Tagore, a leading cultural organization named Chhayanat was formed. It played a major role during the cultural movement of East Pakistan by fighting to keep Bengali culture
alive through the preservation of music and dance. In 1963, Dhaka University began an annual event, ‘Bengali Language and Cultural Week’. Grand celebration of Bengali New Year; *Poila Boisakh* at Ramna Ground Dacca was started by *Chhayanat* in 1965: an expression of Bengali cultural identity. Celebrations like this contributed in reunifying the group and displaying their solidarity. Cultural events transformed to cultural movements which metamorphosed to Bengali nationalist movements in due course. In 1965, during Indo-Pak war, Radio Pakistan and Dacca Television stopped broadcasting all works of Tagore. Another onslaught on Bengali culture was promulgation of East Pakistan Ordnance Number.5 dated 25th October 1965, by Governor Momen Khan which essentially was East Pakistan Press and Publication of Books (Regulation & Control) Ordnance. Through this Ordnance restrictions were imposed on distribution and publication of foreign books and journals presumably to restrict access of Indian propaganda. Essentially it meant banning import of Bengali books and journals from West Bengal or India. This ordinance drew much ire. After revoking the earlier order for some duration, once again in 1967 Tagore’s songs were taken off the air. There were protests against it initially by nineteen intellectuals from different fields which were subsequently enjoined by many. There was mass resentment as Tagore was a cultural icon in Bengal. This was the period when Mujib’s six point program on autonomy was gaining ground. Mujib revered Tagore and was inspired by his ideals. His *Amar Sonar Bangla* (My Golden Bengal) used to be sung in various meetings. This song was made national song of Bangladesh. Other works of Tagore, Nazrul Islam, D.L. Roy etc. were used during the period of freedom struggle by the cultural activists. A prominent among them was Bangladesh Mukti Sangram Shilpi Sangstha (BMSSS). From the very inception of Pakistan, culture of fifty five percent of its citizens was under attack. Culture has been the center point of East Pakistan’s political movement. Cultural activists continually protested suppression of Bengali culture. West Pakistanis never understood that culture and language was very deep rooted among the Bengalis, and the Bengaliness cannot be uprooted by force or intimidation. An American assessment was that ‘the bureaucracy was uninterested and contemptuous of Bengali culture, language and literature, and it was this insensitivity and indifference which aggravated Bengali sentiment and pride.’
Pakistan establishment failed to appreciate that East and West Pakistan had two distinctly separate cultures. Establishment should have realized that ‘nations are made up of human beings where deep feelings about such questions as their languages cannot be safely ignored. Pakistanis attempt to impose uniformity where diversity was desirable had unfortunate consequences.’

Dream of a democratically ruled government with equal opportunity for all envisioned by Jinnah during the construction of Pakistan never came true. “The East Bengal middle class soon realized that one could not live by religion alone. They faced both economic exploitation and lack of political voice within the new country. Pakistan’s power structure was heavily biased in favour of West Pakistan, and particularly its Punjabi and Mohajirs elites, such that its politically conscious Bengali elites felt an acute degree of political exclusion. Combined with the geographical distance between the two wings of Pakistan, and the linguistic differences, demand grew for a degree of autonomous existence for East Pakistan’s people, demands that were not acceptable to the central government.”

Lack of democracy and development during the first two decades frustrated the East Bengalis. Rise and popularity of the Awami League and particularly announcement of its ‘six point formula’ captured the imagination of all and sundry. Essentially six point program was a demand for autonomy based on Lahore resolution: it was also an indication of rise of regionalism. It can therefore be inferred, that the leadership of Sk. Mujibur Rahaman was seen as a threat by Ayub Khan and his government.

**Formation of the Government from 1947-1971: Political Alienation**

Jinnah’s death created a void and there was leadership crisis which got further aggravated by the assassination of Jinnah’s most trusted lieutenant Liquat Ali Khan on 16th Oct 1951. Removal of Khwaja Nazimuddin from the office of the Prime Minister who was a Bengali, by Ghulam Muhammad, a West Pakistani was protested strongly and this brought many East Bengal parties together which formed United front and their discontent was expressed through ‘twenty point agenda’ which included autonomy of the province in line with Lahore Resolution of 1940. In the remaining years, Bengali politicians were rarely given important portfolios. In fact, Pakistan failed to hold regular election and most importantly it did not have a constitution from where it could have
legal and functional directions. Stephen Cohen commented, “Most of the key power players in Pakistan respected democracy and wished Pakistan to be a democratic but they were not willing to make it so. These included the army, which admired democracy in the abstract but found it troubling in practice, civilian bureaucrats, who tended to equate democracy with civilian governments in which they played a major role; and the left which advocated democracy in theory but also had authoritarian inclinations. In fact many groups in Pakistan lacked a nominal commitment to democratic forms, let alone substance”.

In the first 25 years after becoming an independent state, Pakistan made constitutions twice once in 1956 and second time 1962. But both were shelved. Pakistan had seen political instability and domestic disorder too frequently in the initial years which culminated into military rule. On 7th October 1958, all political parties were abolished and provincial governments were dismissed by the President of Pakistan, Major General Iskander Mirza. He also promulgated martial law and installed army Chief General Ayub Khan as Chief Martial Law Administrator. Three weeks later, Mirza was sent to exile in London and Ayub Khan became the sole supremo of Pakistan. Ayub tried to bring in a new vision for Pakistan. He ruled Pakistan by an established civil military coalition where military played the dominant role of principal partner. Punjabi dominated army always considered Bengalis an inferior community vis-a-vis the so called martial race like Punjabis and Pathans. Stephen Cohen opines that in the dominant west wing, the idea of Pakistan pertained to a martial people defending its Punjabi stronghold. Bengal and Bengalis only figured as an investment opportunity or source of foreign exchange.

**Economic Disparity**

Studies carried out by a group of economists like Kabir Uddin, Rehman Shoban and another group of three Harvard economists found out facts regarding glaring economic disparities between the East and the West Pakistan. Important findings included:

- a) In 1950-55 East Pakistan received only 20 percent of development expenditure vis-a-vis 80% for the West Pakistan. In 1965-70, East Pakistan received 35% fund against 65% of West Pakistan.
- b) 40-50 percent of all West Pakistan exports were sold to East Pakistan treating it like a captive market.
c) East Pakistani’s export surplus by trade with foreign countries has been utilized by the central government to finance the deficit of West Pakistan. Total transfer of resources in this manner in the 20 years ending 1968-69 has been computed at 21000 million dollars or Rs.31 million.43

d) In 1969-70, the per capita income in West Pakistan in 1969-70 was 61 percent higher than East Pakistan and double what it was ten years earlier.44 Certain Statistics produced below reflect economic disparity at a glance: 45

Table No.2: Government Spending: 1947-1955

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Grants</th>
<th>East Pakistan (Rs. Millions)</th>
<th>West-Pakistan (Rs. Millions)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Financial Assistance</td>
<td>1,260</td>
<td>10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital Expenditure</td>
<td>620</td>
<td>2,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grants in aid</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>540</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Grants</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>1,530</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign Aid Allotted</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>730</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign Trade(Exports)</td>
<td>4,940</td>
<td>4,830</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign Trade(Imports)</td>
<td>2,580</td>
<td>6,220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defence Expenditure</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>4,650</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table No. 3 Trade between East and West Pakistan: 1948-1970 46

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>East Pakistan</th>
<th>West Pakistan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1948-49</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>137.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950-51</td>
<td>46.0</td>
<td>210.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955-56</td>
<td>220.7</td>
<td>318.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960-61</td>
<td>335.9</td>
<td>800.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965-66</td>
<td>649.7</td>
<td>1,189.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969-70</td>
<td>915.7</td>
<td>1656.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Business houses in East Pakistan belonged mostly to the West Pakistanis. They controlled major industries tea gardens, jute factories, banks and insurance companies and siphoned money to West Pakistan. The economic strangulation of East Pakistan created frustration amongst the population. This frustration gets reflected through the voice of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in his speech during February 1966, “Does it not put you to shame that every bit of reasonable demand of East Pakistan has got to be secured from you at tremendous cost and after bitter struggle as if snatched from unwilling foreign rulers as reluctant concessions?”  

Following table giving comparative statistics of civil and military employment gives a clear indication that West Pakistanis had a hugely disproportionate number in government services particularly in senior appointments.  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>East Pakistan</th>
<th>West Pakistan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Central Civil Service</td>
<td>16 per cent</td>
<td>84 per cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign Service</td>
<td>15 per cent</td>
<td>85 per cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambassadors/Heads of Mission(numbers)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Army</td>
<td>5 per cent</td>
<td>95 per cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Army General Ranking Officer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Navy Technical</td>
<td>19 per cent</td>
<td>81 per cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Navy-Non-Technical</td>
<td>9 per cent</td>
<td>91 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Air Force Pilots</td>
<td>11 per cent</td>
<td>89 per cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armed Forces</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>500,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan Airlines</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>7000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PIA Directors/Area Managers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Railway Board Directors</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Antony Mascarehans observed “the bonds between West Pakistan and the east as religion receded into the background in the face of painful economic disparities.”

**Result of General Election: 1970**

A general Election under Martial Law throughout Pakistan was held at the end of 1970, in which the Awami League led by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was returned to 167 seats out of 169 from East Pakistan. He had the absolute majority in the Pakistan National Assembly. The second largest party the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), which was entirely based in West Pakistan, led by Mr. Z.A. Bhutto captured only 88 seats. All the other parties got 58 seats out of total 313 seats. The Awami League got the mandate of its people on the basis of their manifesto based on its ‘six-point formula’; demands ensuring total provincial autonomy. Text of the ‘Six Point Formula’ mooted by Mujibur Rahman is in Appendix 2.

Bhutto’s stand at this juncture suggests his line of undemocratic thinking where his sole concern was power at any cost. “On 20 December, Z.A. Bhutto, referring to Mujibur Rahman’s majority in the National Assembly, made an uncharitable remark that ‘majority alone did not count in national politics.’ He had fired his first shot in his Machiavellian battle. In yet another affront to Bengali sentiments, he added that the People’s Party had won a majority in Punjab and Sind where ‘lay the real centre of power.’” However on 5th January, 1971, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto the leader of PPP, the majority party in West Pakistan announced his readiness to form a coalition government at the center with the Awami League. At the same time he was opposed to the autonomy issue raised by Mujib. His talks with Mujib failed and he refused to attend the meet of National Assembly at Dacca on 3rd March which was announced by Yahya Khan. Bhutto exhorted that power be handed over to the majority parties in East Pakistan and West Pakistan. Bhutto’s demand was rejected by Mujib stating “Power is to be handed over to the majority party, the Awami League. The Power now lies with the people of East Bengal.”

On Feb 16 Mujibur Rahman got elected as leader of Awami League Legislative party and on Feb 18 he declared that ‘Islam will not be used to liquidate Bengali culture’. On 28th February, Bhutto sought postponement of National Assembly inaugural session and Yahya on the next day (1st March) postponed the National Assembly Session. As a
sequel there was protest all over East Pakistan and a country wide general strike was called on 3rd March. On March 7 at a mammoth public rally at the Dacca race course Mujib declared: “the struggle this time is the struggle for independence….Since we have given blood, we will give more blood. By the will of the Almighty God, the people of this land will be liberated…turn every house in to a fortress. Face (the enemy) with whatever you have.”

The resistance movement called by Mujib was responded by the people across all sections. Everything came to standstill. Financial institutions, academic institutions, factories all stopped functioning. Central Government failed and Mujib defacto became ruler from 7th March to 25th March.

Mujib-Bhutto-Yahya talk held until 24th March failed. And on the evening of 25th March Yahya left Dacca secretly with instructions to Lt.Gen Tikka Khan to ‘sort them out’. Tikka Khan’s order to his troops were, ‘I want the land and not the people. Maj Gen Farman who was carrying out this order wrote in his diary, ‘Green land of East Pakistan will be painted Red.’ It was painted red by Bengali blood.

And on the night of 25th March Pakistan Army cracked down (Operation Searchlight) on the unarmed people with all the might. They attacked Pilkhana Headquarters of the East Pakistan Rifles, Police Headquarters at Rajabagh and Dacca University. Lt Gen Niazi described the ferocity of army action by saying, “the military action was a display of stark cruelty, more merciless than the massacres at Bukhara and Baghdad by Changez Khan and Halaku Khan or at Jallianwala Bagh by the British General Dyer.”

Commencement of Liberation War

Mujibur Rahman at 12:30 am on 26th March declared independence. He said, "this may be my last message; from this day onward Bangladesh is independent. I call upon the people of Bangladesh wherever you might be and with whatever you have to resist the army of occupation to the last. Your struggle must go on until the last soldier of Pakistan Army is expelled from the soil of Bangladesh. Final victory is ours." At 1:30 am Pakistan army arrested Mujib from his residence and three days later he was transported to Pakistan. On 26th March, General Yahya Khan banned the Awami League
and declared Mujib a traitor. Text of Yahya’s address to the nation explaining the grim situation in East Pakistan and justifying his action is given at Appendix.3.

On 10th April, the Provisional Revolutionary Government of Bangladesh headed by Mujib (in absentia) was formed which took oath of office on 17th April at the Amrakanan of Baidyanathatala in Meherpur (now called Mujib Nagar) the appointment holders of the Government of Bangladesh is as given below:

1. President : Sheikh Mujibur Rahman (in absentia)
2. Acting President----Syed Nazrul Islam
3. Prime Minister---Tajuddin Ahmed.

Officers and men of East Bengal Rifles (EBR) and police deserted en masse and formed the nucleus of Mukti Fauz (which later was renamed Mukti Bahini). Lakhs of volunteers from all sections of the society went through a preliminary selection process and swelled the ranks.

**Millions of Refugees Move to India**

Operation Searchlight created such terror and genocide like situations that many number of people fled to India. In a couple of months there number became almost ten millions.

**Photo No.5**
Allen Ginsberg, an American poet wrote a immortal poem named *September On Jessore Road* depicting the conditions of the refugees. A few stanzas reproduced below:

- Millions of babies watching the skies
- Bellies swollen, with big round eyes
- On Jessore Road-long bamboo huts
- No place to s--- but sand channel ruts
- Millions of fathers in rain
- Millions of mothers in pain
- Millions of brothers in woe
- Millions of sisters nowhere to go
- Millions of Souls nineteen seventy-one
- homeless on Jessore under grey sun
- A million are dead, the millions who can
- Walk toward Calcutta from East Pakistan

Such a socio-economic problem was beyond India to cope up with. Prime Minister of India Mrs. Indira Gandhi deeply concerned over the situation, mooted a resolution in the Parliament and announced that India expressed solidarity with the people of East Pakistan. The text of the resolution is in Appendix.4. She requested Pakistan and the world body to ensure speedy political solution and return of refugees. But there was inaction by United Nations and most of the countries gave more importance to the unity of Pakistan than addressing the predicament of 55% of its citizen. India armed and trained Mukti Bahini who was fighting a civil war.

Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra (Radio Station of Independent Bangladesh) played a key role to ignite passion and motivate people by airing programs like *Chorompotro* (Letter ultimate) hosted by M. R. Akhtar, "Jallader Darbar" (Court of a Butcher) by Kalyan Mitra and "Bojro Kontho" (Thunderous Voice) which presented speeches of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Many poems and songs were written for broadcasting. One of those songs *Joy Bangla Banglar Joy* (Victory of Bengal) was the signature tune of the radio. Songs like *Purbo Digante Surjo Uthechhe, Ekti Phoolke Bachabo Bole, Salam Salam Hajar Salam*, became immensely popular. The radio station through its program launched
psychological warfare to boost up morale and motivate people and the Mukti joddhas to face the Pakistanis and keep fighting. The radio station was no less strong than the men fighting with guns.

At last, India joined the war after Pakistani Air Force struck on Indian assets on 3 December 1971. The civil war that was continuing for nine months culminated on 16 December 1971 after two weeks of intense and swift all out military operations by the Mitro Bahini. Thus Pakistan got dismembered with the emergence of Bangladesh.

**Conclusion**

The cessation of Pakistan happened in less than twenty five years of its inception. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad in his memoirs, “India Wins Freedom”, had written –“It was one of the greatest frauds on the people to suggest that religion can unite areas that are geographically, economically, linguistically and culturally different…. No one can hope that East and West Pakistan will compose all their differences and form one nation.”

It is worth quoting admission of Benazir Bhutto expressed in her biography ‘Daughter of the East’. She says, “the democratic mandate of East Pakistan was grossly violated. The majority province of East Pakistan was basically treated as a colony by the minority west. From revenue of more than thirty one billion rupees of East Pakistan’s export, the minority in West Pakistan had built roads, schools, universities and hospitals for themselves, but developed little in the East. The army, the largest employer in our very poor country, drew 90 percent forces from the West Pakistan. 80 percent government jobs were filled by people from the West. The central government even declared Urdu our national language, a language few in East Pakistan understood thus further handicapping the Bengalis in competing for jobs in government or education. No wonder they felt excluded and exploited.”

However her observations omits to mention her father Zulfikar Ali Bhutto’s undemocratic demand of sharing power though PPP was much behind Awami League in election mandate.

It is more often than not wars are generally the result of multiple causes like political, economy, geography, religion etc. But the birth of Bangladesh has proved that culture is one such cause which though less recognized but manifested itself with an organized
warfare signifying Clausewitz’s philosophy that, “war is not an act performed by military men alone but is an expression of the conflict of ideas, objects and the way of life of an entire society with those of another society.” In 1993, Huntington wrote his seminal essay on *Clash of Civilizations* where he famously said, ‘fault line of civilizations will be the battle lines of future’ : possibly in hindsight, similar conclusion can be drawn on the causes of Bangladesh war of liberation-1971.

Ayesha Jalal wrote, “Pakistan’s central leaders had expected to hasten process of assimilation and secure allegiance to a monolithic notion of state sovereignty, instead they created an arena of fierce contestation where Urdu, Mughal power and Islam wore doctrinal than syncretic in complexion, gave a powerful stimulus to the articulation of regional dissent in the linguistic idioms.” On the aftermath of cessation of Pakistan, General Niazi acknowledged that ‘The culture of East Pakistan clashed with the culture of West Pakistan.’ Fault lines of culture became the battle lines of East and West Pakistan. Rafiuddin Ahmed’s observation, “a religious community, without socio-territorial base, is not real” seems true. East Pakistan unlike West Pakistan had a long history of syncretistic culture symbolized and exemplified in the nature of their folk songs, art, literature, music and festivals. The sum total of this mosaic culture is the very Bengaliness. In 1947, it was the wave of religion that created Pakistan. In 1971 it was the cultural movement that started with the language movement, which triggered nationalist movement that transformed into civil war aimed for independence of Bangladesh. Cultural suppression, economic deprivation, and political alienation resulted in cessation of Pakistan. Root cause analyses bring out that out of these three factors, conflict of culture is the *raison d’etre* of creation of Bangladesh. It also signifies triumph of culture over religion and defies the very basis of Jinnah’s ‘Two Nation Theory’ upon which Pakistan was constructed.
End Notes: Chapter-II.

1. Jinnah and Mountbatten Negotiations on Pakistan


3. Macaulay wrote his famous “Minute on Education” which aimed at producing “a class of permorals and intellect.”. In pursuance of this policy, English was brought in as language for higher education and replaced Persian in official, business and court of law transactions. Also read Chaudhuri, Muhammad Ali, p.7.


10. Sengupta Nitish, p.286-287. Raja Indra Chandra Singh of Paikpara was one of its Vice Presidents. Amongst other prominent Hindu members were, Maharaja Jatindra Mohan Tagore, Surendra Nath Banerjee etc.

11. Rabindranath Tagore too opposed this partition. He organized Rakhi utsav to symbolize unity amongst Bengalees and composed his famous poem *Banglar mati Banglar jal, Banglar bayu Banglar fal punya houk punya houk*. Swadeshi movement, boycotting of foreign goods etc. happened in protest. Also read Craig Baxter, *Bangladesh: From a Nation to a State*. (Asia Publishing, 1997). Only a handful of Muslim leaders like Liaquat Ali Khan, Barrister Abdullah Rasul joined
the protest against partition, otherwise majority of the Muslims in East Bengal supported it. Nawab Salimullah of Dacca and Nawab Ali Choudhury of Dhanbari (Tangail) supported the partition. They were the followers of Aligarh school of politics.

12. Nawab Salimullah on the conclusion of AIMEC meeting held at Dacca, convened another meeting where All India Muslim League was formed on 31 December 1906. Later its Head Quarter was shifted to Lucknow in 1910 when Urdu speaking Musalmans of North India controlled the organization. Also read B.D. Banerjee, East Pakistan: A Case Study in Muslim Politics (1969).


14. Allahabad Resolution-1930


19. Seven leaders present on 2 June 1947, when Mountbatten announced his proposal of partition were, From Congress party; Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, J.B. Kripalini, M.A. Jinnah, Liaquat Ali Khan and Abdur Rab Nishtar from the Muslim League; and Baldev Singh representing the Sikhs. When on 3 June 1947 after seeking approval of Gandhi, Mountbatten announced it in All India Radio, Nehru, Jinnah and Baldev Singh announced their acceptance. Not a single leader from Bengal was present.

21. Radcliff Boundary Commission was appointed both for Bengal and Punjab presided over by Sir Cyril Radcliff, a British jurist. For division of Bengal, four members were part of this commission, two Hindus and two Muslims. They were Justice Bijan Mukherjee and Justice G.C. Biswas and Justice S.A. Rahaman and Justice A.M. Akram. Because of their differences in opinion, final award was an arbitrary award by Radcliff which defied many logic. The award which was kept secret was revealed on 17 August, two days after independence to make it fait accompli. In less than six weeks, the task of such complexity deciding fate of many millions was finalized.


31. This song was written by Abdul Gaffar Choudhury and the tune was given by Abdul Latif. Later it was translated in English by Kabir Chowdhury. The song is recognized as the most influential song of the language movement. (also see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amar_Bhaier_Rokte_Rangano).


39. Sheikh Mujibur Raman, *Bangladesh, My Bangladesh,* (New Delhi, Orient Longman, 1972), pp. 130-149. Also see J. N. Dixit, *Liberation and Beyond,* pp. 17-20. Here full text of six points program with Mujib’s explanatory note has been included.


41. Ibid.


43. Ibid.

44. Table 2. Source: Feroze Ahmed, Ethnicity and Politics in Pakistan, Oxford University Press, Karachi, 2000, p. 20. quoted in Ian Cochrane, *The Causes of Bangladesh War,* p. 45


47. Table 4. Dixit J. N. *Liberation and Beyond,* pp. 15-16.


50. Mujib’s speech quoted in Mascarenhas Antony, “*The Rape of Bangladesh*”, Vikas Publication, Delhi, 1971, p. 17. Also see “Speeches of Sheik Mujib.” 1972. Translation in English. External Publicity Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, People’s Republic of Bangladesh
51. Ibid
52. Speeches of Mujibur Rahman.
53. Ibid.
57. Mujib’s last message. see “Speeches of Sheik Mujib.” 1972. Translation in English. External Publicity Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, People’s Republic of Bangladesh
58. Allen Ginsberg will be remembered by Bengalis for calling the world's attention to the suffering of victims during the Bangladesh Liberation War in 1971. He wrote his legendary 152-line poem, *September on Jessore Road*, after visiting refugee camps and witnessing the plight of millions fleeing the violence. Also, See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Allen_Ginsberg


