Annexure - I

PAPERS PUBLISHED


Agartala Conspiracy Case and Sheikh Mujibur Rahman: A Historical Study

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Notwithstanding the fact that the Agartala Conspiracy case is a less-discussed topic in the history of North Eastern States and India, it was a turning point in the history of Pakistan and in creation of one sovereign state like Bangladesh. In one article “Swadhinata O Jatiyatabad” (Independence and nationalism) Prof. Hasan Abdul Kairym hailed Maulana Bhasani and Zia-ur-Rahman as the leaders of freedom movement of Bangladesh and the saviour of nation respectively. He cautiously tried to by-pass the role of Sk. Mujib and other leaders of Awami League saying that they fled away while people were in danger due to Pakistani aggression.¹ On the otherhand, Shahriyar Kabir, a veteran columnist, while writing an article namely ‘Bangladesh Muktijuddha O Bharat’ (The Freedom Movement of Bangladesh and Bharat) did not give any weightage to the role of Agartala or Tripura in the freedom movement of Bangladesh.² But, historical evidences provide us with a different picture.³

The Agartala Conspiracy Case not only elevated Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the President of Awami League, to the National Hero of Bangladee nationalism which culminated in a very familiar word - 'the Bangabandhu (the saviour of Bangladesh) but also paved the way for freedom struggle of Bangladesh. This case generated mass-upsurge in eastern part of Pakistan which ultimately compelled the President of Pakistan, Mr. Ayub Khan (the 'Ironman') to step down in favour of General Yahya Khan. The Autonomy movement that started under six-point demands of Awami League in 1966 was in a moribund condition under the presure of Ayub Khan Govt. But the case gave it a regeneration and transformed it into a movement for Independence of East Pakistan.⁴

So, Agartala, the capital of Tripura, became famous not only in the history of Pakistan & Bangladesh but also in the history of the world. Agartala at that time became the headlines of many important newspapers of the world. The word, Agartala, came again and again in the speeches of the leaders of the world in the UNO and other headquarters of world politics.³ Mr. Thomas William, the Member of parliament of Great Britain and Law Advisor to the Queen of Great Britain came to Dhaka to fight the case in favour of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.⁶

Background of the Case

In December, 1967, it was in the air that Pakistan Government was going to file a conspiracy case against some persons of eastern wing of Pakistan. The news was made public in January, 1968 while Pakistan Government issued three press notes. The first press note was issued on 1st January, and it was published in the Dailies next day. The Government confirmed that some Govt. employees had been arrested for anti-national activities. The Second press note issued on 6th January came to public on the next day which ran thus: For anti-national activities some 28 personnel had been taken into custody in East Pakistan. The Conspiracy was unearthed in the last month.⁷ The Press note reiterated that the personnel arrested so far were determined to secede East Pakistan with the help of India.⁸ It was also said that the enquiry had almost been completed and trial should begin immediately. Out of 28 arrested and accused so far, commander Muazzem of Pakistan Navy was named as number one. Surprisingly enough, after 11 days i.e., on 18th January, another Press note was circulated and it was in public that Sheikh Mujib, the leader of Awami League and Autonomy movement was accused as number one. Ultimately, on 19th June, 1968 trial began against total 35 nos. accused on the charge of secession of East Pakistan with the help of India. As the accused were of various sections of the society i.e., of Politics, Navy, Army, Airforce and Civil service, a special Tribunal was set up under the Criminal Law Amendment (Special Tribunal) Ordinance of 1968 promulgated specially for the trial of conspiracy case.⁹

Naming of the Case

When the case was filed it was officially named as “State Vs. Sk. Mujibur Rahman and others-accused” But the Pakistan Govt. was not satisfied with that simple and traditional name. Major Nasser, the public relations officer of the Army Squad, formed to look after that particular case mentioned it as ‘Agartala Conspiracy Case’ while he was briefing the matter to the Press. From that time onwards, the Press widely publicised the case as “Agartala Conspiracy Case”.¹⁰
Why Agartala?

Agartala, the capital town of Tripura, was nearer to Dhaka, the capital of East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) than any other capital town of India. Tripura was surrounded on three sides by the then East Pakistan. The Ayub Khan Government came to know that Mr. Mujibur Rahman, ex-stuard of Pakistan Navy (not S.K. Mujib) and Mr. Ali Reza went to Agartala in July, 1967 at the initiative of Commander Muazzem and Mr. Oza, the then First Secretary of Indian Deputy High Commissioner in Dhaka for consultation regarding possible help in the collection of arms & ammunitions from India for the mutiny designed by Commander Muazzem and others with the help of Sheik Mubjir. The Pakistan Govt. took the opportunity readily to brand S.K. Mujib as anti-national and pro-India; on the otherhand, Pakistan Govt. contemplated to crush the nascent rebellion which was really planned by some Navy and Army personnel. On the contrary, the Ayub Govt. had as such no solution to the Autonomy movement based on six-points of S.K. Mujib. It arrested S.K. Mujib several times during the short period of three months (mid February to mid May, 1966). But all these attempts went in vain.

Indo-Pak relations suffered a jolt since its birth in 1947. The Pakistan Govt’s policy was channelised to oppose any kind of move by India and vis-a-vis Kashmir was mainly the bone of contention. Two big wars had already waged without any fruitful result. The 1965 Indo-Pakistan war was a great failure to Pakistan as well as its president Ayub Khan, the Iron Man. So, Pakistan Govt. wanted at any cost to show that India was aggressive in respect of Pakistan. The divulsion of conspiracy gave it an unbelievable opportunity to show India making conspiracy against Pakistan. The Pakistan Govt. thought that its allies and other international reaction would rescue it from both internal and external danger.

The Pakistan Govt. thought to kill two birds with a single shot. It came to the conclusion that while the people of Pakistan came to know that S.K. Mujib was involved in the conspiracy to secede East Pakistan with the help of India, he would rather be a criminal instead of a hero in the eyes of the people of Pakistan and he would easily be hanged to death. As a result, the Pakistan Govt. thought that the Autonomy movement would get lost. On the contrary, SK. Mujib and his party, the Awami League became more popular than ever while the popularity of veteran Marshal Law administrator and President Mr. Ayub Khan went down.

The Great Upsurge of 1968-69

The autonomy movement which was started in 1966 and continued throughout the year 1967, came to a stand-still for sometime. As Nehal Karim tells, “Actually, there was an atmosphere of intolerable suffocation in the East wing under the tyrannical rule of Ayub Khan particularly after 1965. The state emergency declared in September 1963 during the Indo-Pak war continued till March, 1969. During this time, the Press was fully brought under control by the Government through press and publication ordinance and the establishment of the Press Trust. Political opponents of the regime were put behind the bars indiscriminately under security Act. Dissent was suppressed with a ruthless hand. Free thinking was also under strict surveillance. An authoritarian University Ordinance continued to enforce discipline in the temples of learning. The Govt. even tried to ban the pursuits of art and culture and the Tagore music and his literature were under embargo.” In those unprecedented circumstances, the proceedings of the so called Agartala conspiracy case helped in crystallizing the nationalistic zeal of the people of East Pakistan. The sufferings of the Bengalees, their depravations and exploitations and injustice done to them were all the central theme of the proceedings. Moreover, the reports of the proceedings in the newspapers inspired the Bengalees more than ever to try for an independent homeland. What the Bengalees had been thinking or discussing secretly so far, they began to voice it openly. Separation from Pakistan became a vital issue for their survival as an ethnic group.

Students’ Movements

Nehal Karim mentions, on account of Government’s aggressive mood in the Agartala conspiracy case, the people in East Pakistan felt hurt and this forged the feeling of unity in their minds. This happened particularly in the case of students. They were so much surcharged with the nationalistic feelings that they spearheaded the entire movement against the Ayub Regime and even the politicians were obliged to lend their support to the agitational activities.

We find almost the same interpretation about the students’ movement from other sources which are referred to earlier. In the latter part of 1968 while most of the leaders of Awami League were in jail or under custody and while the other opposition leaders were at dilemma, various students’ organizations in eastern wing came together to form a common
platform like all parties’ Students’ Action Committee i.e. SAC. The three dominant components in the SAC were East Pakistan. Students’ league (Rightist) and two factions of East Pakistan. Students’ Union (Leftist). The SAC led massive movements in East Pakistan with their Eleven-Point programmes which included six-point programmes of Awami League22. Nehal Karim remarks that the Agarala Conspiracy case brought both the leftist & rightist Students’ Organizations to fight not only against Ayub’s regime but also against colonial dominance of East by West Pakistan. The Eleven-Point programmes of the SAC were so popular that the dominant political parties irrespective of rightist and leftist threw away their dilemma and supported the students’ movements. The SAC demanded the withdrawal of all political cases including Agarala conspiracy case23. These issues gathered such a momentum that the people of Eastern wing spontaneously supported and made it a turning point.24

**Formation of DAC**

The mass upsurge (1968-69) which had been sweeping eastern wing of Pakistan made all the political parties in Pakistan specially in East Pakistan to think otherwise. On January 8, 1969, eight political parties of Pakistan came together to form a common platform like Democratic Action Committee or DAC. Only Pakistan Peoples’ party (PPP) of Z.A. Bhutto and National Awami Party (NAP) of Maulana Bhasani remained out of DAC.25

The DAC took 8-point programme excluding the demand for autonomy but including the demand for release of Sk. Mujib and other political leaders. So, Agartala conspiracy case got no preference in the mind of the leading political parties. Prof. Abdul Halim writes that the DAC as an organization represented whole Pakistan and took a remarkable role in the great mass upsurge of 1968-69. It called for an all Pakistan general strike on February 14, 1969, and the strike was a big success26.

The popular movement, however, continued and turned to be violent while Asaduzzaman, a student leader was shot dead. Violence begot violence. In mid February Sergeant Jahurul Haque (accused no 17) of the conspiracy case and Dr. Samsuzzoha, Proctor of Rajshahi University had been brutally killed by the military and police respectively. these killings made the people of East Pakistan so furious that they began to defy the curfew and began to destroy the Govts’ property and that of the collaborators of the Ayub’s regime. In the funeral prayer of

**Ayub's Govt. on a Backfoot**

The Govt. of Ayub Khan totally failed to curb the spontaneous and violent mass-movement in East Pakistan which created tension in West Pakistan also. The Ayub government called a Round Table Conference (RTC) on Feb 17, 1969 to discuss the situation with political leaders. But this conference was a failure as S.K. Mujibur Rahman could not participate in the RTC due to the case. He was under Govt. custody and declined to be released under bail or pay-roll. The second attempt for RTC was another failure for the same reason. Meanwhile, the people of East Pakistan stood in favour of Sk. Mujib and others. They began to realize that the conspiracy case was actually a conspiracy of Pakistan. Govt. to deny the legitimate demands of the Bangalees. Under unprecedented pressure, the Pakistan Govt. declared Feb. 21 as a National holiday which came be known as the famous language Martyrs’ Day. This historic day was enthusiastically observed throughout East Pakistan with new determination for self-reliance of Bengalees of Pakistan.29

So, the Govt. of Ayub Khan was on a backfoot and he declared that he would not contest the presidential election in future. He also confessed the failure of his Government29. On February 22, 1969, the Pakistan Government had no other way but to withdraw the Conspiracy Case and release Sk. Mujib and other accused of the case. The case proved abortive and a boomerang to Pakistan. Government.30

**Sk. Mujibur Rahman - “The Bangabandhu”**

Immediately after his release Sk. Mujib emerged as a symbol of Bangalee Nationalism. On February 23, 1969, in a massive rally of about
10 lacs people at Race Course Maidan Sk. Mujib was declared ‘The Bangabandhu’ by Tufayel Ahmed the leader of SNC and the people admitted it with raising their hands towards the sky and with huge claps. The Bangabandhu’ then took the leadership in all most all movements that followed and secured massive mass support in the nationwide election and secured absolute majority.

Notes & References

1. Dainik Dinkal (Special issue), a National Daily Published from Dhaka, March 26, 2003.
6. Shahida Begum, op.cit
10. Tripura Darpan, op.cit
11. Ibid
12. Shahida Begum, op.cit, pp.1-33
13. Nehal Karim, op.cit p. 186
15. S. Ahmed & other (ed), op. cit, Article by Abdul Halim, pp.151-176
16. Shahida Begum, op.cit, pp.1-33
17. S. Ahmed & others (ed), op.cit, pp. 151-176
20. Nehal Karim, op.cit p.187
21. Nehal Karim, op.cit p.188
22. S. Ahmed & Others (ed), op. cit
23. Nehal Karim, op.cit pp. 189-90
24. Shahida Begum, op.cit
25. Nehal Karim, op.cit pp.190-91
26. S. Ahmed & others (ed) op.cit. p. 176, Shahida Begum, op. cit, pp. 1-33
27. Nehal Karim - op.cit
28. S. Ahmed & others (ed) op.cit
29. Ibid
32. S.Ahmed & others(ed), op.cit., p-176, Shahida Begum, op. cit., p. 917
Annexure - II

Model Questionnaire

Data Collection for Research Project Entitled
“TRIPURA IN THE LIBERATION MOVEMENT OF BANGLADESH (1947-71)”
Under Tripura University

নাম .................................................................

পিতার নাম .........................................................

ংয়স .............................................................

ঝিকনা .............................................................

সাক্ষর ........................................................

১. বাংলাদেশের মুক্তি আন্দোলন (১৯৭০-৭১) ত্রিপুরার মানুষের বিশাল অবদান ছিল। এই বিষয়ে একটি বকুল।

২. কেন ত্রিপুরার পাহাড়ী বাসিন্দারা এর হয়ে বাংলা দেশের মুক্তি আন্দোলনকে সমর্থন করেছিল?

৩. কোথায় কোথায় শরণার্থী শিক্ষা / মুক্তিযোদ্ধার ট্রেনিং- এর ব্যবহার ছিল-- মনে থাকলে উল্লেখ করান।
৫. এই সময় (১৯৭১) ত্রিপুরা কয়টি রাজনৈতিক দল ছিল? মুক্তিযুদ্ধে তাদের দলগত ভূমিকা কি ছিল?

৫. এই সংগ্রামে ত্রিপুরা ছাত্র-শিক্ষকদের সক্রিয় ভূমিকা ছিল? এই ব্যাপারে উল্লেখ করুন?

৬. কেন ছাত্র ছাত্রীদের এই আন্দোলনকে সমর্থন করেছিল?

৬. (২) এই সময় কি কি ছাত্র সংগঠন ছিল?

৭. ছাত্র ছাত্রীদের একাডেমিক ইয়ার কি নঠ হয়েছিল?

৮. মহকুমার শহরগুলোর কোন ছাত্র আন্দোলন / ছাত্র নেতার নাম কি মনে পড়ে? পড়ুলে বলুন।
৯. শোনা যায়, শরনার্থী এদের টাকা সঠিক পথে খরচ হয়নি। এ ব্যাপারে আপনার মত কি?

১০. ত্রিপুরার (১) রাজনীতি, (২) সমাজ, (৩) অর্থনীতি, (৪) সংস্কৃতি কি ঐ মুক্তি আন্দোলনের দ্বারা প্রভাবিত হয়েছিল?

১১. আপনার ব্যক্তিগত কোন অবদান থাকলে দম করে উঠিয়ে করুন।

১২. ভারত বাংলাদেশ সম্পর্কে বিভিন্ন বিষয়ে চিত্ত ধরেছে বলে মনে হয়। আপনার মত কী?

১৩. তখন হাজারির পাঁচ পত্রিকার কী ভূমিকা ছিল?
১৪. বাংলা দেশের মুক্তি আন্দোলনে ত্রিপুরার সমাজসেবী নারীদের বিশেষ ভূমিকা ছিল। এ ব্যাপারে আপনার মতামত কামা।

১৫. বাংলা দেশের মুক্তি আন্দোলনের ফলে ত্রিপুরায় মোকামায়ে ব্যবস্থা এবং হিন্দু মুসলমান সম্পর্ক উন্নত হয়েছিল বলে জানা যায়। এ ব্যাপারে আপনার মত ব্যক্ত করলে ভাল হল।

১৬ আর যদি কোন বিষয় আপনার কাছে উল্লেখযোগ্য মনে হয় উল্লেখ করুন।

বিশেষ উল্লেখ:
অর্থনীতি আলাদা কাগজ ব্যবহার করতে পারেন।

তাং - আগরতলা

নির্দেশনা/ঝামিক
মোকামায়ে রহমান, সহ আধিপত্য
হারিয়ে মেমোরিয়াল কেন্দ্রের,
আগরতলা
Annexure - III (a)

Original Documents


Source: State Archives, Govt. of Tripura, Agartala
A letter written to Sri Sachindra Lal Singh, the Chief Minister of Tripura, by Khandakhar Mostaque Ahmed, Minister for Foreign, Law and Parliamentary Affairs, Govt of Bangladesh in Exile, dated October 21, 1971.

Source: State Archives, Govt. of Tripura, Agartala
Annexure - III (c)

A photograph of the Circuit House at Agartala where the ‘embryo’ of the Bangladesh Govt. in exile was formed in April, 1971.

*Courtesy : Nandancharcha, Agartala.*
Annexure - IV (a & b)

Refugees in Tripura

A Refugee Camp in Tripura
Source: An Epitome of Misery, Public Relations and Tourism Department, Government of Tripura, Photography by T. Singh.

Refugees in a Camp in Tripura
Source: An Epitome of Misery, Public Relations and Tourism Department, Government of Tripura, Photography by T. Singh.
Annexure - IV (c & d)

Refugees in Queue for Ration in Tripura
Source: An Epitome of Misery, Public Relations and Tourism Dept., Government of Tripura,
Photography by T. Singh.

Cooking inside a Refugee Camp
Source: An Epitome of Misery, Public Relations and Tourism Dept., Government of Tripura,
Photography by T. Singh.
Solidarity towards the Liberation Movement of Bangladesh

The writers, artists and intelligentsia at Agartala in support of Liberation Movement with a Cut-out of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Courtesy: Sri Robin Sengupta, Agartala

The Journalists of Tripura along with the Foreign Journalists on the way to Dhaka to cover surrender of Pak Army at Dhaka. Courtesy: Sri Robin Sengupta, Agartala
The Journalists of Tripura with the Family Members of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.
Sitting in the middle is Begam Mujibur Rahman.
Courtesy: Sri Robin Sengupta, Agartala
Annexure - VI (a & b)

Training and Preparation for Operation of the Mukti Bahini in Tripura

The Famous Camp at Melaghar, the Headquartes of Sector 2.
Courtesy: Sri Robin Sengupta, Agartala

Mukti Fouj in Training.
Courtesy: Sri Robin Sengupta, Agartala
Annexure - VII (a)

The Refugee for Medical Care

A wounded Refugee Child on the way to Hospital.
Courtesy: Sri Robin Sengupta, Agartala
A wounded Refugee at the GB Hospital at Agartala.
*Courtesy: Sri Robin Sengupta, Agartala*