CHAPTER - V

INDIA IN INTER-WING RELATIONS OF PAKISTAN

Ever since Pakistan was created, there had been tension between the people of East and West Pakistan on account of political, economic and social disparities between them. The plight of the East Pakistanis was not better than that of the people of a colony. Whereas the relations between India and West Pakistan had never been good, Indians and East Pakistanis were sympathetic towards each other. Unlike West Pakistanis, East Pakistanis wanted to normalise relations with India since they had lukewarm interest in Kashmir and other matters of dispute between India and Pakistan. This further strengthened the West Pakistan’s suspicions against East Pakistan on the one hand and against India on the other. This background contributed much towards India becoming a party during Bangladesh crisis.

Unlike many modern countries, Pakistan’s birth was based on the centrality of religion being the basis of a nation. Jinnah maintained that Hindus and Muslims were two nations in the Indian sub-continent.¹ It may be added here

that the East Bengali people were not as much enthusiastic about the two-nation theory as the West Punjabis. But a state to be stable or viable, must have a national foundation. Whatever its earlier acceptance and validity the two-nation theory could not give Pakistan a basis for continued existence. No body knew this better than M.A. Jinnah, the founder and the head of the new state, himself. In his famous address before the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan on August 11, 1947, he said, "......... you will find that in course of time Hindus would cease to be Hindus and Muslims would cease to be Muslims, not in the religious sense, because that is the personal faith of each individual, but in the political sense as citizens of the state." Jinnah did not mention the Bengalis when he classified the Muslims into the Punjabis, Pathans etc. although the Bengalis of Pakistan were mostly Muslims, but he did mention the Bengalis when he made a classification of the Hindus. It means he like many other West Pakistani leaders did not regard the Bengali Muslims as Muslims in the real sense. This act both of omission and commission may or may not have been accidental, but at any rate the Muslims of East Pakistan felt that they were not treated at par

2. Ibid. pp. 48-49.
3. Ibid.
with the Muslims of West Pakistan. The East Bengalis were not quite unaware of such feelings of West Pakistanis about them. This may perhaps explain that ever since the birth of Pakistan they started showing their consciousness for their rights and equality and started the struggle against disparities and discriminations.

**East Bengalis' grievances against West Pakistan.**

In July, 1947, (soon after the June 3, 1947 announcement of Mountbatten) some of the East Bengali leaders met in Dacca and formed the Gana Azadi League. They published a manifesto under the title "Asha Deui Karmasuchi, Adarsha" (Immediate Demands, Programme and Ideals).

In this manifesto, they expressed their determination to launch a struggle for the economic emancipation of the masses, without which social and cultural progress would not be possible.

The Gana Azadi League visualized, by relating all its demands to East Bengal, the complete autonomy of East
Bengal—at least by implication. It may, in fact, be described as the forerunner of the future nationalist movement in East Bengal. At the same time, it could not completely free itself from the traditional thought of the Muslim League. One of the features of the manifesto was the demand for removal of illiteracy with the mosque as the basis.

One reason for the development of consciousness of separateness among the East Bengalis was the sense of deprivation among them, which was started developing with the birth of Pakistan due to the economic, political and social discriminations shown to them by West Pakistanis some of which are given in the following lines.

A keen foreign observer, Stephen K. Lewis (J.J.), has pointed out that Pakistan's refusal to devalue its currency, coupled with a policy of high protection granted to the industries of West Pakistan, ruined the poor cultivators (particularly the jute growers) of East Bengal but benefited

5. Ibid., p.2
the industrialists of west Pakistan throughout the fifties.\textsuperscript{6} The Jute Ordinance, 1949, converted into law in 1957, enabled the West Pakistani permit holders to exploit the East Bengali Jute Growers even more thoroughly.\textsuperscript{7}

Jute was Pakistan's main foreign exchange earner. But these earnings from East Bengal's Jute and tea were mostly spent for the industrial development of West Pakistan.\textsuperscript{8} An important factor of capital formation in an underdeveloped economy is profit from exports. A particular region cannot expect to industrialize itself unless its earnings from export are ploughed back. The following table reveals the Pakistan government's stepmotherly attitude to East Bengal in this regard.\textsuperscript{9}


\textsuperscript{9} Foreign Trade Statistics of Pakistan, June, 1967, Karachi Central Statistical Office.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Exports</th>
<th>Imports</th>
<th>Exports in excess of imports</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1952 to 1957</td>
<td>East Bengal</td>
<td>39,69,716</td>
<td>21,59,552</td>
<td>(+)18,10,164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1952 to 1957</td>
<td>West Pakistan</td>
<td>34,40,371</td>
<td>51,05,093</td>
<td>(-)16,64,722</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thus, imports surpluses of West Pakistan were more than balanced by exports surpluses of East Bengal. But, exports surpluses of East Bengal were spent to benefit West Pakistan. This was the result of a cleverly manipulated policy of issue of import and export licences. Offices for the issue of such licences were manned almost exclusively by the Punjabis of West Pakistan who would prefer West Pakistanis in issuing licences. Moreover, in the Finance and other Economic Ministries of the Central Government of Pakistan, the West Pakistanis happened to be in large number. As Harig Ali points out, the west


Punjabis were taking all care to prevent the emergence of an indigenous capitalist class in East Bengal. So heavily weighted was the bias in favour of West Pakistan and against the East wing, that when the ministers and officials talked of Pakistan development, what they really had in mind was West Pakistan. Colin Clark was entrusted by the Pakistan Government to suggest ways and means for the economic development of Pakistan. But his report was suppressed because he recommended industrialisation of East Bengal.13

During the period 1952-53 to 1954-55, the annual average of East Bengal's imports from West Pakistan was 303 million rupees while that of West Pakistan's imports from East Bengal was only 165 million rupees.14 It was calculated that by the end of 1955 at least 300 million rupees were being drained from East Bengal to West Pakistan annually.15

In the fifties, East Bengal’s share of Public Sector investment or development expenditure of the Government of Pakistan was always between 20 to 30 per cent. Thus the per capita share of West Pakistan of development expenditure was three times that of East Bengal. In East Bengal, therefore, communication, education, public health - every thing remained relatively much under-developed, although large sums of money were spent in West Pakistan under the same heads. East Bengal’s per capita income during 1950-51 to 1954-55 was rupees 297 only, against West Pakistan’s rupees 343. The gap actually increased during the First Plan period (1955-60), when East Bengal’s per capita income declined to rupees 275.17

The following table of per capita consumption of some selected commodities during 1951-52 to 1969-60 will demonstrate East Bengal’s continuous economic backwardness in relation to West Pakistan.18

---

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Commodity</th>
<th>Units</th>
<th>East Bengal 1951-52</th>
<th>East Bengal 1959-60</th>
<th>West Pakistan 1951-52</th>
<th>West Pakistan 1959-60</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cloth</td>
<td>Yards</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coal</td>
<td>Lbs</td>
<td>46.0</td>
<td>28.0</td>
<td>87.0</td>
<td>66.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electricity</td>
<td>Kilo watts</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>28.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kerosene</td>
<td>Gallons</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patrol</td>
<td>Gallons</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tea</td>
<td>Lbs</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cigarettes</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>76.0</td>
<td>183.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fewer Opportunities were available in the services to the East Bengalis.

The price index in East Pakistan remained higher right through except in the 1964-65 period, when it was 1.28 points lower. In 1965-66, the price index showed 10.74 points higher in East Bengal as compared with that of West Pakistan, in 1966-67 it was 17.12 higher, in 1967-68 it was 3.70 higher, in 1968-69 11.59 higher in 1969-70 11.32 higher and in March, 706.08 higher. According to Sheikh Mujib, "While inflation has been mounting, those who are worse hit are the poor people of Bengal. The price

of essential commodities has been 5 per cent to 1 per cent higher in Bengal than in East Pakistan.

Nevertheless, from available figures mostly official, the truth could not be kept concealed. The figures of the average annual budget are as under:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total revenue</th>
<th>£6,000</th>
<th>P.</th>
<th>Rs.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>expenditure on defence</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil Expenditure</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While East Pakistan provided 60% of the total revenue, it received only about 25% for its expenditure and West Pakistan providing 40% in the central exchequer, received 75% of the remaining.

The position of foreign trade and exchange earnings may be noted in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>West Pakistan</th>
<th>East Pakistan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Export</td>
<td>Import</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>During 10 years</td>
<td>£620 M. Pound</td>
<td>£2315 M Pounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>period of</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958-68</td>
<td>Pounds</td>
<td>Pounds</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

20. Taken from the Speech of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman released jointly by Radio Pakistan & the Pakistan Television Corporation on November 29, 1970.
In foreign trade, East Pakistan exports constitutes 59% of the total but imports only 30% of the imports which consisted of consumer goods and food, very little was left for development projects. During the same period, West Pakistan earned 41% of the total foreign exchange and was allowed 70% of the foreign exchange earnings. Major portion of this was spent on various development projects in West Pakistan.

Let us have a look at the inter-zonal trade as well:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Exports from West to East Pakistan</th>
<th>Exports from East to West Pakistan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1964-69</td>
<td>Rs. 5.292 Million</td>
<td>Rs. 3.174 Million</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This is an example of continuous drain of East Pakistani capital to West Pakistan. It had been estimated that total transfer of resources from East Pakistan to West Pakistan since 1947 had been 3,000 million pounds.

Let us look at the typical exports items for the years 1964-65.
Jute + Jute products (all from E. Pak.) 8. 124,580 M.
Cotton + Cotton manufactures (mainly from West Pak.) 8. 51,880 M.
Hides & skins (mainly from East Pak.) 8. 6,130 M.
Tea (all from East Pakistan) 8. 1,000 M.
Wool (all from Pakistan) 8. 7,300 M.
Others (East & West together) 8. 56,200 M.

Let us also look at the percentage of allocation of funds for development projects as under:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>West Pakistan</th>
<th>East Pakistan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foreign exchange for various developments</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign aid (excluding US aid)</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US aid</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan Industrial development Corp.</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan Industrial Credit &amp; Investment Corp.</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial Development Bank</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House Building</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>77%</strong></td>
<td><strong>23%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The same was the case in the matter of foreign aid, to Pakistan, most of which was given by countries like USA, China, UK and Russia etc. along with that of world Bank. For example the total US economic grants and credits to Pakistan from 1947 to 1970 had been 3.436 million dollars. A major part of this foreign aid was spent on West Pakistan.

As regards the comparison of the industrial and agricultural development in both the wings the position was as under:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cotton textile production in million yards</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>6836</td>
<td>508</td>
<td>550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sugar Production in 000 tons</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>30+</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cement Production in 000 tons</td>
<td>305</td>
<td>1934</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Things were not better in the field of agricultural development which was as under:

| Fertiliser distribution during 1964-68, 000 in tons | 739 | 66% | 371 | 33% |
| Improved seed distribution during 1964-69, in 000 tons | 342 | 89% | 40 | 11% |

Increase in rice production in 000 metric tons

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>56</th>
<th>153</th>
<th>175</th>
<th>259</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>273% increase</td>
<td>46% increase</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Distribution of tractors wheel type (number)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>20,069</th>
<th>1,825</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Other large (number)</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>91%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Needless to mention that the agricultural land in East Pakistan had more acreage and most lands produced two to three crops a year whereas in the West acreage is less and the productivity per acre was much smaller. One fails to understand the logic in this state of affairs.

Another criterion to measure progress is the consumption of electric power per head of the population. In Pakistan growth in power production had grown considerably. West Pakistan generated by hydel, thermal and other means a total of 338,000 k.w. (63% of the total) whereas East Pakistan generated 179,500 k.w. (17% of the total). A great share of foreign aid had been spent on various power development projects. Two giant irrigation and power development projects in Indus Basin cost 1,800 M. dollars and WAPDA spent Rs. 1453 M. in five years 1959-64.

In the field of education also there was a steep fall of 32.3% in the number of graduates in East Pakistan, while there was a handsome increase of 21.3% in graduates in West Pakistan. The number of post-graduates had increased by 39.6% in Pakistan, but in this category also East Pakistan
had suffered a set back by 12%. West Pakistan retrieved the position to a great extent by showing a big rise of 68.6%. The consequence of this was felt in the proportion of regional representation in the services.

All such factors were reflected in East Bengal's representation in the civil service. According to the information given by Khwaja Shabbuddin, Minister for information and broadcasting, Government of Pakistan in the National Assembly of Pakistan even as late as 1968, the East Bengali representation in the civil services of Pakistan (the elite cadre of civil servants comparable to the Indian Administrative Service) was only 36 per cent.

In other allied services like taxation audit and accounts, police customs etc., the situation was no better. Among the small top bureaucrats and bureaucrats-turned-politicians and generals who formed the real ruling elite of Pakistan, there was not one who was capable of representing East Bengalis interests.

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24. Mohammed Ayoob, op.cit., p.36.
even out of former ICS officers in Pakistan in 1965 who were 47 in total, none belonged to East Pakistan.\textsuperscript{25} W.W. Hunter's book written in 1971 bears eloquent testimony to the plight of Eastern wing which was predominantly Muslim.\textsuperscript{26}

It may also be pointed out that very few East Bengalis were admitted to the defence Services. Indeed the East Bengalis had a feeling as if the central administration showed no concern about the defence of East Bengal. Thus the promise of the Central Government to establish a naval base at Chittagong and a pre-cadet college in East Bengal remained unfulfilled. Indeed on one occasion, Mohammad Ayub Khan was reported to have said that East Bengal was indefensible.\textsuperscript{27}

Under-representation of Bengalis in the army was even more severe, believed to be 10\% or less. The army which accounted for almost 90\% of the man power in the armed forces had been recruited primarily from four


\textsuperscript{26} W.W. Hunter, "The Indian Muslims", 1964, 1971, p.117.

districts of Northern Punjab - Rawalpindi, Sialkot, Jhelum, Gujrat and two districts of the NWFP, Peshawar and Kohat. Approximately sixty per cent of the army consisted of Punjabis and approximately thirty-five per cent of Pathans. The others supplied the remaining five per cent.  

As far East Bengal's share in the officer corps in the armed forces, it was estimated at 5% in 1963. In the naval officer's corps, it was put at 19% in the technical cadre and 9% in the non-technical cadre. The proportion in the naval ranks was around 28.5%. Among air force officers, the East Bengalis constituted only 11% of pilots, 27% of navigators, 17% of technical officers, 31% of administrative officers and 13% of education officers.  

The Government's lopsided emphasis on defence was naturally responsible for the meagre outlay on education and other nation-building activities. The real problem was the location of the basic expenditure point in the army in West Pakistan. After all such a large central expen-

30. G.S.Bhargava, op.cit., p.141.
diture was bound to have a multiplier effect on the economy. As Sheikh Mujibur Rahman stated, "East Pakistan had even acquiesced in the federal capital as well as all the defence headquarters being located in West Pakistan. This meant that the bulk of the expenditure on defence and civil administration amounting to about Rs.270 crores, or over 70% of the Central budget is made in West Pakistan. . The centralisation of economic management has steadily aggravated the existing economic injustices to the point of crisis." There were the twenty families in Pakistan especially West Pakistan which had nearly come to control the economy of Pakistan by virtue of government's policies and the way in which they were implemented.31

According to official experts, East Bengal had transferred approximately 2.6 billion dollar to West Pakistan over the period 1948-49 to 1968-69.32 The regional allocation of foreign loans and credits for the period 1949-60 revealed that West Pakistan got 519,886,426 dollars, East Pakistan 127,876,527 dollars.33

While the East wing had balance of payment surplus of $488.4 million until 1966 because of excess of imports over exports, there was an adverse balance of $1,763 million for the whole country. Out of total advances by commercial banks of $7,440 million, the East wing had only $2,390 million.

According to Mahbubul Haq, a leading official economist of Pakistan, the top 22 families controlled approximately 66% of industrial assets, 70% of insurance funds and 80% of bank assets.

In matters of agricultural policy also, East Bengal was discriminated against. The policy decisions regarding agriculture inputs, in terms of tractors, seeds, fertiliser, insecticide, tube-wells etc., were taken and implemented with remarkable alacrity as far as the wheat growing areas of West Pakistan - particularly Punjab - were concerned.

34. J.S. Bhargava, op. cit. p.135.
These glaring economic and other disparities between West Pakistan and East Bengal, and the consequential concentration of wealth in one region of the country was likely to prove dangerous for the process of nation-building in Pakistan. This is, of course, the normal process under capitalism, unless forces to reverse it operate or unless conscious steps are taken by the government to reverse this process. But nothing of the sort happened. But if one adds to this the concentration of political power also in the hands of a coterie in the West Wing, the situation certainly had become ominous quite a few years before the eventual showdown.37

When the Ayub Khan regime fell and the socio-political repercussions began to be realized in this developmental inequalities, US aid administrators and planning officials began to talk in terms of a commitment to "distributive justice" and "federal balance in Pakistan". The Planning Commission of Pakistan also felt the need of this change, "The development strategy of the 1970s has to change fundamentally. While essentially protecting the growth rate already achieved, a greater regional and social balance is being attempted in its composition."38

Apart from all these, there was a problem of national integration. When a country is so situated geographically, national integration is inherently difficult and requires serious efforts even in ordinary circumstances. But instead of that hardly any system was developed in Pakistan for the purpose of national integration. Ataur Rahman Khan gave vent to the feelings of the East Bengalis when he said, "I did not feel as much when I went to Zurich, to Geneva or Switzerland, or London as much I feel here in my own country (in Karachi) that I am in a foreign land." Thus people of East Bengal were compelled to feel like foreigners in West Pakistan, in their own country because they were generally looked down upon by the West Pakistanis, particularly the Punjabis. In fact they were shocked at the non-Islamic and crude practices of the West Pakistani rulers and the well-off sections of the West Pakistani Society.

The Language Issue

On the question of language too there was a great tension between both the wings. Despite the fact that the Bengali was spoken by the majority of the Pakistan's population, it was not recognised as a state language.

As regards the composition of the linguistic groups of Pakistan, we find the following statistics based on the 1951 census.42

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language group</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bengali</td>
<td>54.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punjabi</td>
<td>27.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pashtu</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sindi</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urdu</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baluchi</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A determined stand in favour of Bengali was taken by the Tasaddun Majlish, a cultural organization of the

students and the teachers of Dacca University established on September 1, 1947. On September 15, they brought out a booklet under the title 'Pakistani Rashtrakbasha Bangla-na-Urdu?' (The state language of Pakistan - Bengali or Urdu?) in which they demanded both Bengali and Urdu to be the state languages of Pakistan. Writing in the booklet, Abul Kalam said that the old illogical imperialist policy would be followed if either Urdu or Bengali was made the state language of the whole of Pakistan.

Another contributor, Abul Kausar Ahmed warned that the imposition of Urdu on East Bengal would result in making the Bengalis an uneducated people. On December 5, 1947, the working committee of the East Bengal Provincial Muslim League also expressed its opinion against making Urdu the official language of East Bengal.

Instead of approaching the subject with flexibility, the West Pakistan elite took up confrontation with East Bengalis.

44. Ibid.
45. Ibid, p.15.
46. Ibid, p.18.
47. Ibid, p.19.
Thus the supporters of Urdu in West Pakistan argued that Urdu should be accepted because it was the language of Islam (while remaining uninformed and oblivious of the fact that Muslims spoke Bihari, Indonesian, Malay, and several other languages) and Bengali should be rejected because it was the language of the Hindus and, therefore, an Indian language.

The protests and demonstrations in favour of making the Bengali as state language continued for long. The east Bengalis were making this demand for as they put it, saving their language and culture. They felt that the west Pakistani authorities were bent on destroying the Bengali culture through replacing Bengali by Urdu.

The language issue proved to be an important factor for widening the gap between the people of both the wings of Pakistan.

Inter-wing Tension and Pak Suspicions against India

On account of these disparities and the language issue a tension was mounting between the people of both the wings which was marked by various agitations and strikes in East Bengal for elimination of disparities. The West Pakistani authorities took strong measures to
suppress the agitations. Among the various measures which led to the widening of the gulf between the two wings, the first perhaps was the dissolution of the Legislative Assembly of East Pakistan on May 30, 1950. The United Front Government was dismissed and Governor's rule proclaimed in East Pakistan.

The East Bengalis felt that the concentration of political power in the west was at the root of many of the disparities and therefore if the political power in Pakistan is shared reasonably by both the wings, most of these disparities would be done away with. In view of this, they also started raising a demand for greater autonomy to the Eastern wing. In 1957 even the provincial legislative assembly adopted a resolution to grant full autonomy to East Bengal without delay leaving only defence, foreign affairs and currency in the hands of centre. 48

When the East Bengalis went on seeking remedy for their grievances, further strong steps were taken against them. Among such steps were the removal of East Pakistan Governor, dismissal of the government and imposition of President's rule in 1958. 49

As the agitation for autonomy in East Bengal gradually acquired strength, the West Pakistani repression against the East Bengalis also grew more and more.

At the same time an anti-India campaign with the support of Ayub-Administration was going on in Pakistan. But the people of East Bengal did not attach much importance to the hate-India campaign of the government of Pakistan the reasons of which have been analysed at another place in this chapter.

The Indo-Pakistan tension ultimately resulted in war between both these countries in September, 1965. This war was a major watershed in Pakistan. Among other things it clearly indicated the hopelessness of the situation of East Bengalis and their utter defencelessness. In course of the war, the East Bengalis cooperated with the war efforts of the government by various means. After the war was over, the fact that during the whole episode, East Bengal was left practically to her fate and the government of Pakistan and the army authorities concentrated their entire defence effort in West Pakistan caused further resentment among the East Bengalis. The East Bengali leaders now reinforced their movement by declaring that
East Bengal needed exclusive defence preparedness. After 1965 Indo-Pak war the East Bengalis started feeling still more the need for autonomy for East Pakistan. They felt that autonomy which could bring an end to their dependence upon West Pakistan, was an essential pre-requisite of their overall development as well. As in many other fields, a difference of approach was visible between the people of both the wings in regard to the Tashkent Agreement also. This agreement between India and Pakistan met with vociferous protests in West Pakistan. Bhutto resigned from the cabinet and even Miss Jinnah joined the chorus in condemning the Agreement. The East Bengali leaders, however, whole-heartedly welcomed the Agreement.

Kashmir was in any case, a remote issue for East Bengal and the Bengali leaders saw no reason why East Bengal's interests should be jeopardized for what might be happening in Kashmir. Good relations with India were very necessary for East Bengal's defence and better trade prospects. The East Bengalis showed little interest in Kashmir issue and other matters of dispute between India and Pakistan.


51. The East Bengal Newspapers like the Ittefaq and the Sangbad, made this clear on various occasions.
because they found their own interests quite at variance from those of West Pakistanis. They felt that their interest lay in the normalisation of relations with India. They felt that their resources were best utilised in West Pakistan while they were not given their due. Although to some extent, some of the disparities between the two wings were the result of capitalism but the East Bengalis were quite sore due to the fact that no serious efforts compared to those made in the West Pakistan were made by the West Pakistan authorities to industrialise their region which they felt had ample scope for that. They had little interest in the Indo-Pak disputes since they did not make any difference for them. This did not mean that they were not patriotic, but their perception of national interest was not the same as of West Pakistanis. This East Bengalis soft approach towards India was further creating suspicions in the minds of West Pakistanis about Indian and East Bengalis intentions.

Even the 22-day war between India and Pakistan and the subsequent developments on the whole intensified the East Bengali movement. The East Bengalis were particularly enraged by the fact that inspite of their

whole-hearted cooperation with the government during the war (although as stated earlier the central government badly neglected East Bengal's defence), they were accused of unpatriotic motives by the West Pakistani politicians and newspapers. It was perhaps because of this doubt of the patriotism of the East Bengalis that the Central Government had banned the printing or sale of books or periodicals published in a foreign country without the prior permission. The ruling group of Pakistan was afraid that literature from West Bengal was developing a sense of Bengali nationalism among the East Bengalis.\(^53\)

Of abiding importance in the history of the nationalist movement in East Bengal is Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's pamphlet Amader Banchbar Davi (our right to live) with the sub-title "Chhay Dafa Davi" (6-point Programme) issued on March 23, 1966.\(^54\) Sheikh Mujibur Rahman wrote this booklet in defence of the 6-point demand which he and his party made public in February, 1966.\(^55\) The 6-points created a sensation all over the country and drew strong criticism from the President and his supporters as well as many West Pakistani politicians who were apparently opposed to the

\(^{53}\) Ibid., p.348.


\(^{55}\) M.K. Dasgupta, 'Revolt in East Bengal', Published by M. Dasgupta, 1971, p.77.
All of them accused the Bengali leaders of disruptionist tendencies of working as Indian agents and of trying for the creation of a sovereign united Bengal which might be easily "gobbled up" by India. This 6-point programme of the Sheikh was in other words a programme to achieve autonomy for East Pakistan.

Nujib claimed that the six-point programme provided for the solution of inter-wing political and economic problems. Nujib had "no manner of doubt that" his 6-point programme "reflected the mind and correctly represented the demands of the 50 million East Pakistanis of their right to live." He emphasized the fact that "these demands are no new points invented afresh by me or any individual, but are in reality long-standing demands of the people and pledges of their leaders awaiting fulfilment for decades."

Sheikh Nujib reminded the people of East Bengal that 'the enemies' had the economic and military backing of both the USA and China. In order to prepare the people

57. Bangla Desh Documents, op.cit., p.23.
58. Ibid.
59. Ibid.
for the long and hard struggle ahead, he urged upon "the
democratic forces in general, and the ...anti League in
particular, to spread out in the country and carry the
message of the 6-point programme to every hearth and home." He
expressed his confidence that "the six-point programme
......... has undoubtedly become the national demand of
the people particularly the people of East Pakistan...." He
termed his programme as "national demand" since it was
supported by the overwhelming majority of the East Bengalis.
The term 'national' was, however, with reference to East
Bengal and not the whole of Pakistan.

Finding great popular support in East Bengal for
the 6-point programme which most East Bengalis came to
regard as their "Freedom Charter," Ayub and his govern-
ment decided to crush a popular movement by force. Sheikh
Ayub and other popular leaders were arrested and put
behind the bars under the so called Agartala conspiracy
case. A large number of political workers were detained.

60. Ibid, p. 24
61. Ibid.
The arrest of Mujib and others did not, however, end the agitation in East Pakistan. But as good luck would have it, there was also agitation for democracy in the West wing. Under the pressure of these two synchronizing movements, on February 22 the so-called Agartala Conspiracy case was closed and Sheikh Mujib and other accused persons were released unconditionally. A little later Ayub Khan was forced to resign in favour of the Army Chief Agha Mohammed Yahya Khan who later assumed the Presidency of Pakistan.

In a broadcast to the nation on March 26, 1969, Yahya Khan announced nationwide elections in 1970 on the basis of universal adult franchise. Surprising though it may seem, quite unexpectedly the elections were actually held.

Sheikh Mujib, in his election campaign, concentrated on the 6-point formula of the Awami League and the eleven-point charter of the East Bengali students which emphasized both provincial autonomy and the establishment of a socialist order. In fact, the election manifesto of the Awami League promised the implementation of the 6-point programme

as well as "the creation of a just and egalitarian society free from exploitation and for a socialist economic order." 64

The elections of December, 1970 resulted in the emergence of Awami League as a powerful party which won 167 out of 169 seats allotted to East Bengal in the National Assembly. On the one hand it got majority of the seats in the Pakistan National Assembly on the other it established itself as an unchallenged representative of the people of East wing.

Political deadlock and the army takeover in East Pakistan.

After winning an absolute majority in the National Assembly of Pakistan, Sheikh Mujib naturally wanted to form his own government at the centre. But Mr. A. Bhutto and other West Pakistani leaders were opposed to this. In this way, they feared, the West Pakistan would be dominated by the Eastern wing. Bhutto wanted to form his own government in West Pakistan. But the sheikh rejected Bhutto's demand for a share in power. The West Pakistani leaders led by Mr. A. Bhutto were opposed to the six-point programme of

64. Bangladesh Documents, op.cit., pp.56-82.
the Sheikh on the ground that this would lead to the dismemberment of Pakistan in the course of time. Therefore, deadlock was created on this issue. Consequently Yahya Khan postponed the session of the National Assembly which was scheduled on March 3, 1971 indefinitely on the pretext that there were grave differences between the West Pakistani and East Pakistani leaders on the question of the draft constitution of Pakistan. Bhutto had announced the boycott of the National Assembly scheduled on March 3, 1971 and threatened to launch a movement against it. After postponing the National Assembly, Yahya Khan removed the Bengali governor of East Pakistan and promulgated Martial Law there.

While in protest against these measures, the civil disobedience movement launched by the Awami League was going on, Yahya Khan held talks with Sheikh Mujib, which bore no fruit. The failure of the talks was followed by the West Pakistani army action in East Pakistan which resulted in a big loss of life and property there.

Even the devout Muslims were not spared in certain cases by the Pakistan army. The ‘ums of Mosques were dragged out and bayoneted. At Hajshahi, a mosque had been bombed with napalm.65 Ever since this armed action in East

Pakistan, India had been raising its voice against it inside as well as outside the country. The Indian protests against the military action in East Pakistan won for her a soft corner in East Bengal, but with this her relations with Pakistan were further strained.

Refugee Problem and India's Involvement

On account of the aforesaid atrocities on the East Bengalis, a large number of refugees started pouring into Indian territory. East Bengalis had, of course, for long been coming into India as indeed they continue to do today. But this influx was different in kind. Whereas previously they entered India in search of better opportunities, now they came in to save their lives from the army of west Pakistan. The heavy influx of refugees into Indian territory strained the Indian administration and it was feared that it might severely affect the country's economic, social and political life. It was difficult for India to remain silent spectator as more and more refugees entered India.66

Regarding his visit to the refugee camps, Mr. Arthur Bottomley, a British M.P. said that the visit had been the most

harrowing mission he had undertaken in his entire public life. Giving a horrifying picture of the miserable situation, R.K. Mishimura, Japanese M.P. said that during his tour of the camps in the border areas he had found thousands and thousands of men, women and children covering long distances to cross over to India for safety.

Similarly Mr. Reginald Prentice, a British M.P., after having seen something of the tragedy in Bangladesh at first hand said that he had never known anything so terrible. Doctor Hans adgar John, a prominent member of the West German Parliament reacting sharply over the refugee plight said that after visiting the refugee camps in India "one can understand that what is happening in East Bengal is a violation of the Charter of Human Rights and a crime against humanity." Mr. Charles Percy a U.S. Senator who was visibly moved by the account related by the refugees said that a solution must be found for the return of the refugees who had to flee to India because of killings, lootings, mistrust and fear of lives.

68. The Times of India, New Delhi, July 26, 1971.
70. Ibid, August 9, 1971.
71. Ibid.
Mr. Edward Kennedy, a US Senator, who had visited the refugee camps, said that it was "the greatest human tragedy of our times." Briefly describing the situation he said that he witnessed the horror-stricken men, women and children fleeing for life.

The former Deputy Minister of the UAR Mr. Ali Hafees while being on India tour also visited the refugee camps and described the refugee condition as 'pathetic'. Chester Bowles, a former US ambassador to India wrote to New York Times that South Asia was in imminent danger of erupting into a tragic endless war. To save the situation the world community should relieve India of the burden of supporting the refugees.

While individual US citizens and leaders were deeply moved by the situation of Bangladesh refugees, this did not have a serious repercussions on their government policies. Mrs. Indira Gandhi the Prime Minister of India condemned the action and moved a resolution in Lok Sabha on March 31, demanding the immediate cessation of the massacre of the

72. The Hindustan Times, New Delhi, August 14, 1971.
74. The Times of India, New Delhi, August 25, 1971.
defenceless people of Bangladesh. In this resolution which
was passed unanimously, the house expressed its "deep
anguish and grave concern at the recent developments in
East Bengal." The House also expressed its "profound
sympathy for and solidarity with the people of East Bengal
in their struggle for a democratic way of life." The House
further called upon "all peoples and governments of the
world to take urgent and constructive steps to prevail upon
the government of Pakistan to put an end immediately to the
systematic decimation of people which amounts to genocide."
The resolution was ended with the words, "the House wishes
to assure them (people of Bangladesh) that their struggle
and sacrifices will receive the whole hearted sympathy and
support of the people of India."76

To cope with the refugee problem the government of
India decided on humanitarian considerations to extend
necessary relief assistance to the refugees in the shape of
food and shelter. In addition arrangement had also been
made to control epidemics. Supply of milk powder had also
been arranged for children, pregnant and nursing mothers
and the sick. Other essential articles of daily use i.e.
clothes utensils etc. were also being supplied in deserving

76. quoted from Bangladesh Documents, op. cit., p.672.
cases. The government of India had, therefore, urged the United Nations and foreign Governments through Indian missions abroad, to share the responsibility in tackling the vast refugee problem.

To impress upon the foreign countries the gravity of the situation, S. Swamin Singh, the Foreign Minister of India toured many countries of the world. He visited Moscow, Bonn, Paris, Ottawa, New York, Washington and London between 6th of June and 22nd of June, 1971. In these capitals he had detailed discussions with the heads of governments and the foreign ministers. At the UN Headquarters he had discussions with the UN Secretary General U. Thant and his colleagues. He also met in every capital a number of other government leaders, legislators, editors, social workers and leaders of public opinion.

During these discussions the main focus of attention and emphasis was on the grave and serious situation created for India by the vast influx of refugees (about 7 million by that time) from East Bengal and the continuing crisis caused in this region due to the massive killings by the West Pakistani military machine in East Bengal.

Several points of agreement emerged out of these talks. These points were: (1) all military action in East Bengal must stop immediately, (2) the flow of refugees into
India must stop, (3) the conditions must be created enabling the refugees to return to their home in peace and security, (4) the political solution acceptable to the people of East Bengal was the only way of ensuring a return to normalcy, (5) the situation was grave and fraught with serious dangers for the peace and security of the region, (6) the burden, due to the refugee influx, placed upon the resources of the government of India was intolerable and that the international community must give assistance in this effort both in cash and kind.77

All these Indian efforts to solve the refugee problem were taken by Pakistan very strongly. All this seemed to her a conspiracy by India and East Bengalis against Pakistan.

Recognition Issue.

As the Bangladesh crisis deepened and as refugee inflow began to have an impact on the Indian political system the demand for granting recognition to Bangladesh in India was gaining strength. Even the British Labour M.P. Stone House urged the Government of India to take the initiative in recognizing the Government of Bangladesh even if it got

77. Bangladesh Documents, op. cit, p.697.
involved in war with Pakistan. The Bangladesh government and later its newly opened missions in New Delhi and London also pleaded before the world for granting recognition.

The sarvodaya leader Mr. Jayaparkash Narayan supporting recognition demand said that it would not be any violation of international law to accord immediate recognition to Bangladesh. From democratic standpoint, he further opined, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's government was far more legitimate than the military rule of President Yahya Khan.

Dr. L.M. Singhvi, a leading jurist and former M.P., in a letter to the Prime Minister Mrs. Gandhi on April 7, 1971 suggested that the union government should consider the possibility of according recognition to Bangladesh as a belligerent power under international law.

According to a constitutional lawyer and Secretary of the Indian Council of Public Affairs, Mr. Basudeva Prasad there was no bar to India's recognition of the provisional government in Bangladesh under the international law.

78. The Times of India, New Delhi, July 6, 1971.
Sunday Express, a conservative paper also called for an early recognition of East Bengal as a separate state. 81

The former union Law Minister T.A.K. Ahsan had expressed the view that the provisional government of Bangladesh satisfied all the conditions for de-jure recognition. 82

In response to the pressure by the various political parties, the press and the people of India, the leaders of the government of India made statements to the effect that in principle the Government of India was not opposed to the recognition of Bangladesh as an independent country. It was, however, explained that it would be done when the conditions would be ripe for such act. Foreign Minister S. Swarn Singh said in a statement in Rajya Sabha on May 25, 1971 the government was constantly in touch with the situation. This was a matter about which the government gave a great deal of thought from time to time and if at any stage it felt that a step in the form of a formal recognition was necessary, it would not hesitate to take that step. 83

The Prime Minister also gave a similar statement in the

82. Motherland, New Delhi, April 8, 1971.
83. Bangladesh Documents, op.cit, p.676.
Lok Sabha on May 26, 1971 and said that the government had
given a deep and anxious thought to the whole issue and it
would be "guided by an independent assessment of the
situation and take a decision in our best interests."84

On account of the demand for the recognition of
Bangladesh in India, the rift between India and Pakistan
was further widened. Pakistan seemed to be confirmed in
its belief that India wanted to dismember it.

India Blamed for the Crisis.

For the whole of the crisis Pakistan government
blamed India. Prabodh Chandra writes that according to
Yahya Khan it was not any action on the part of his forces
which had compelled the people to leave East Bengal. The
job had been accomplished by Indian infiltrators, by the
persecution of non-Bengali Muslims by the Bengali muslim
supporters of the Awami League and by the perfidy of the
Hindu population of East Bengal. He said that although his
government was willing to take refugees back, it was India
which was standing in the way of such repatriation. Thus

84. Ibid, p.680.
India had been accused by Yahya Khan as the only party to the dispute. 85

Bhutto expressed his fear thus:

India would attempt by threats and seduction, by cultural infiltration and by sheer weight of proximity, to absorb East Pakistan into West Bengal. The present theme of Indian propaganda is that the fifty-five million people of East Pakistan should not sacrifice their future and be exploited for the sake of the five million of Jammu and Kashmir, who are, it is said, as close to East Pakistan, as are, say, the Muslims of Iran and Iraq. Were India to succeed in absorbing Kashmir, she would advise East Pakistanis to regard the people of West Pakistan as concerning them as little as the people of Kashmir. 86

President Yahya Khan also blamed India for entire tragic episode. He held that the demand of East Pakistan of total freedom of trade was to resume trade with India. He also alleged that the change in the Sheikh's demand of autonomy to independence was also guided by India, since India never accepted partition of 1947 and had always been

on the look out for weakening Pakistan. He alleged that India had supplied money and arms to Awami League. Yahya further alleged that India continued to infiltrate troops and to encourage the revolt. It was, he added, for this reason that the refugees could not return. He said, "... The Indians imagine that they would be able to take even a piece of my territory without risking a war, they are making a grave error. Let me warn the world this would mean war, total war, which I hate. But for the defence of my country, I shall not hesitate." Gen. Yahya alleged further that India was using the refugees to make a political capital. It was getting more money from the UNO. There were lots of ways to aid the refugees. India had only asked for money. It was preventing them from returning and said that they could return only after an agreement was signed. Refugee problem was not Indian but that of Pakistan. He also said that the Indian version about the number of refugees was utterly wrong. But India strongly rejected all these allegations levelled against her.

Softness Between India and East Bengal.

After India's partition, while Indo-Pakistan relations had always remained strained, India and East Bengal invariably adopted soft postures towards each other. Both shared similarity of views on many issues to a considerable extent. In 1953 when West Pakistani leaders negotiated a military alliance with the United States, the East Pakistanis protested against it. They observed September 11, 1953 as a protest day against US imperialism. Many of the East Pakistani leaders like Bhutto continued to oppose US military alliances and thus took a stand on this issue similar to that of India. Such leaders declared that international problems including Pakistan's differences with India should be resolved by peaceful means. Indians believed, therefore, that the East Pakistanis were less chauvinistic than the West Pakistanis.

Ever since the birth of Pakistan there had been a referred to earlier serious conflict over various economic and political issues between both the wings of Pakistan. This conflict continued to be a matter of serious interest to India. After the establishment of military dictatorship in Pakistan the rift between the two wings became more pronounced. India believed that military dictatorship had been able to exploit the so-called fears of West
Pakistani people against the East Pakistanis. Both the wings never saw eye to eye with each other over many important national and international issues. Indeed East Bengalis were not enthusiastic even about Pakistan's Kashmir policy. 88 India had all along watched with great interest the conflicts and divisions inside Pakistan and was careful not to hurt East Bengalis' sentiments.

The East Bengalis on their part were also soft towards India ever since the birth of Pakistan. For example on April 30, 1954, Fas ul Haq visited Calcutta where he had spent the best part of his life. The Bengalis on this side of the border were glad to have him in their midst after a lapse of many years, and felicitated him in a number of public functions. In Calcutta, Fasul Haq gave vent to his feelings. On May 4 he said, "It is important that the peoples of two Bengal (East Bengal in Pakistan and West Bengal in India) should realize the fundamental fact that in order to live happily they must render mutual assistance to each other....." 89

Mr. Fasul Haq said politicians might partition territory but they could hardly divide the heart of the

89. Jayanta Kumar Roy, op. cit., p. 64 and Chandmay Mitava, Iti Samrasmomvra Chhilo. (The Struggle had to be - in Bengali) in Dosh, April 17, 1971, p. 1117.
people. He reminded his audience that language was the most important unifying factor in history and urged upon the peoples of two Bengals, who were bound together by a common language, to forget their difference and feel themselves to be one. For himself, he said, partition of the country had no meaning, Fazlul Haq's assertions in Calcutta certainly indicated the trend of thought of many East Bengalis of that time.

Fazlul Haq's statements in Calcutta gave rise to sharp criticisms in West Pakistan. Haq and a few other ministers of his Government went to Karachi to clear the misunderstanding with the Central Government. There Haq agreed to give an interview to one Callahan, a New York Times reporter. This man published a sensational report in his paper on May 23 that year. The substance of the report was that Haq wanted an independent East Bengal. Haq said that the report contained, "nothing but deliberate falsehood and perversion of facts."

The Central Government of Pakistan took the Callahan report at face value and dismissed the Haq Ministry on

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90. Jayanta Kumar, Ray, op.cit, p.64.


May 30, 1954. On the same day, Governor's rule was imposed on East Bengal. Major General Iskander Mirza was sworn in as the Governor of East Bengal.

The East Bengali leader Subravardy who was opposed to many Pakistan's policies earlier, seemed to have changed his views later on when he started supporting Pakistan's policy towards USA which resulted in the differences between him and some of the other East Bengali leaders. His relations with Bhimani and other leftist leaders of East Bengal deteriorated when he openly supported the bilateral military pact with the USA and the defence Pacts like NATO and the Baghdad Pact (or CENTO). Many East Bengalis strongly suspected that military aid by the USA would actually enable the ruling group of West Pakistan to perpetuate their domination over East Bengal.

Another stage in the development of Bangla nationalism was the organization of Kagpari Conference. Important towers and gates were named after Ravindranath Tagore, Surya Sen (the leader of Chittagong Armoury Raid), Debendranath Hittaranjan Das, Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose and even Bidhan Chandra Roy who was at that time the Chief Minister of West Bengal. The Maulana also invited a cultural delegation from West Bengal. The delegation was headed by Hamayun Kabir and had as its members, Tarasankar Benerjee,
itbdul Odud, Probodh Kumar Sanyal, Naren Dev, Badharani Dev and other well known figures in West Bengal's art and literature.

India was conscious about the emergence of this Bengali nationalism and always thought it prudent not to hurt it. Following this policy during the Indo-Pakistan war of 1965, India, while it could deal a crushing blow to the eastern wing of Pakistan, desisted as stated earlier, from taking action against East Bengal and limited her operations to the west despite many provocations. India believed that the West Pakistanis and not East Bengalis, were mainly responsible for waging war against her. Apart from other factors India's soft policy towards East Bengal was greatly influenced by the liberal views of Sheikh Mujib and his party.

After the massive verdict given by the people of East Bengal in 1970 general elections in favour of the six-point formula of Awami League of Sheikh Mujib for autonomy in East Pakistan, India kept a close watch on the events there. When Bhutto and other west Pakistan leaders frustrated the will of the East Bengalis by not allowing their elected representatives to meet and consequently the East Bengalis rose in revolt in March, 1971, there was, as we have said above, a spontaneous and sympathetic response in
India. Within a week of the West Pakistani crackdown on East Bengalis, India, due to her closeness with East Bengal, her own security considerations caused by the mass influx of refugees, and other political considerations, condemned the repression strongly and stepped up its political and diplomatic efforts against it inside and outside the country as we have noted above.

Pakistan army and other West Pakistani political leaders thought:

Sheikh and his people were lacking in a proper Pakistani spirit. Their stand on Kashmir issue was lukewarm and they wanted normalization of relations with India. This could not suit the army which was ideologically saturated from top to bottom with racist and religious chauvinism against the Bengalis who had been traditionally regarded as dark and weak with Hinduism.93

East Pakistan had never allowed hatred of India to become a conditioned reflex, as it became in the western wing. It always considered Pakistan’s hostility towards India a special condition of the West Pakistan mind and Islamabad’s overwhelming preoccupation with Kashmir as a vested interest of the military regime. These East Bengali

considerations for India were further strengthened when the Western wing intensified its exploitation and later repression of East Bengal. First a desire for closer and economic cooperation with India began to be more openly expressed; next a desire for contacts on a wider cultural front, especially with West Bengal, and finally India was urged to intervene and help when the West Pakistan army let loose its terror in March, 1971.

East Bengalis' hatred for West Pakistanis, thus, also became a factor in their softness towards India. The East Bengalis had been inculcating a feeling that all the policies of Pakistan were framed while giving priority to the interests of West Pakistan. They were unhappy over the fact that no serious efforts were made by Pakistani Government as compared to those made in West Pakistan to industrialize East Bengal and even East Bengal's own resources were not being utilized in the best interests of its own people. They believed that Pakistan's foreign policy which was mainly anti-India and Pro-US and the West was not at all in the interest of East Pakistani people. Their interest - economic and political - necessitated the normalization of relations with India. This East Bengalis attitude further increased West Pakistan's suspicion of East Bengal. Since the US saw its own interests tied with those of West
Pakistan during Bangladesh crisis, it followed a pro-
Pakistan and anti-India and anti-Bangladesh policy during
the crisis.

Together with all this background which brought
India and East Bengal closer, India's policy in favour of
East Bengal seems to have been far-sighted. Any influence
of East Bengal on the Pakistani political system would be
favourable to India, because the East Pakistan never felt
the same hostility towards India as West Pakistan. Nor, as
we discussed above, had it the same commitment and possible
politicization on the Kashmir issue as was the case in the
Western wing and would like to keep this issue in a low
key. And in any case the only thing which would satisfy
East Pakistan was autonomy and this would mean a relatively
weaker Pakistan.

In any case, when the trouble did occur in 1970-71,
even a pro-China leader such as Maulana Shabani addressed
an appeal to India for aid. This clearly showed the shift
in the sentiments caused by Peking's reaction. Another
gain could be that the secular democracy could claim to be
the best government for multi-racial developing countries
with greater strength and the myth of an enduring nationhood
based on religion would have been exploded.
The risks were great. It was clear that if Bangladesh went under, or the struggle became confused, the pendulum would swing in the opposite direction. The Pakistan-China axis against India would be strengthened. Peking's policies would have been regarded as irresistible, secularism and democracy would have been on the retreat and India would have a chaotic embittered and impoverished huge population on its eastern border.94

Thus we have clearly seen the circumstances, the historical, cultural, political and economic considerations which were responsible for the relative closeness of India's relations with East Bengal. This in turn aggravated Indo-Pak relations. The USA, was already having apprehensions about Indian moves for it did not want India to become a predominant power in the South Asia. In the American eyes the Indian sympathies with Bangladesh during the crisis were part of India's strategy of becoming great power.

United States felt that a liberated Bangladesh with Indian help, would strengthen India since, in that case, India would face a weaker enemy - a dismembered Pakistan.

Such Pakistan could not then be as effective in playing the American game of containing India.

Deepening of the Crisis and India's Role.

Consequent upon this Indian pro-Bangladesh attitude and sympathies for East Bengalis, there was a great concern in India at the press reports of President Yahya Khan's statement that Sheikh Mujibur Rahman who was arrested on March 26, 1971 and jailed in West Pakistan, would be "court martialed" and that he could not say whether or not the Sheikh would be alive when the so called Pakistan National Assembly met. Reacting on the statement the Indian Foreign Minister said in the Lok Sabha on August 9, 1971 that any such trial of Sheikh Mujib would be a gross violation of human rights and deserved to be condemned by the whole world.95 Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi on August 10, 1971 in a message to Heads of the government said

We apprehend that this so-called trial will be used only as a cover to execute Sheikh Mujib. This will aggravate the situation in East Bengal and will create a serious situation in India because of the strong feelings of our people, and all political parties. Hence our grave anxiety. We appeal to you to exercise your influence with President Yahya Khan to take a realistic view in the larger interest of the peace and stability of this region.96

The Indian foreign minister also in a message to the UN Secretary General U Thant on August 10, 1971 said that India would like to appeal to the UN to take urgent steps to request government of Pakistan not to take that action which was certain to make their difficulties and ours very much worse. Any thing they did to Mujib would have grave and perilous consequences.97

The Deputy minister of external Affairs said in the Majya Sabha on August 12, 1971 that to stage a farcical trial against Sheikh Mujib was a gross violation of human rights and deserved to be condemned by the whole world. "We express our condemnation of the action and warn the government of Pakistan of its serious consequences."98

96. Ibid, p.712.
97. Ibid.
98. Ibid, p.713.
Almost five hundred members of Parliament from all parties except the Muslim League addressed a memorandum to UN Secretary General U Thant appealing him to save the life of Sheikh Mujib. That document warned that if any attempt was made to try him by the military government of Pakistan, waves of terrible reaction would sweep East Bengal and for the consequences of which the government of Pakistan would be held responsible. Later the Muslim League also joined in demanding the release of Sheikh Mujib. Protest demonstrations were held all over India. Bar Associations passed resolutions condemning the trial. Public meetings were held to denounce the move of 'murder' Mujib for the crime of winning the first ever national elections in Pakistan. This India's protests against Sheikh's arrest and trial also contributed towards the same Pakistani belief that India was in league with East Bengal against Pakistan.

**Indo-Soviet Treaty**

In August, 1971 amidst the mounting East Bengal's crisis and thereby further worsening of Indo-Pakistan relations, a step forward was taken by India and the USSR by signing a Treaty of Peace Friendship and Cooperation. Its immediate objective was to counteract the conduct of unfriendly neighbours during the Bangladesh crisis backed by
the personal diplomacy of President Nixon which seemed to have been designed to isolate India. The Treaty between India and the USSR had changed the international picture obtaining not only in Asia but all over the world. The threat of war from Pakistan had for the time being receded.99

The prospect of such a treaty had been under consideration since Leonid Brezhnev had mooted plans for an Asian Collective Security System in 1969. India had not accepted his idea, pleading "non-alignment." In the summer of 1971 however, events in the sub-continent made the treaty highly desirable and India grasped the opportunity.

Jagdish Bhagwati, a renowned economist, stated about Dr. Kissinger's summer consultations in New Delhi during the latter's visit to India that in case of war with Pakistan, Kissinger was supposed to have said, China would come in and India would not get any American help as she had in the Sino-Indian war of 1962.100

By signing this treaty with India, the Soviet objective must have been to facilitate Indian military

action in East Pakistan, if it became necessary. However, the Soviet concern at that stage was still to avoid war between India and Pakistan and this became clear by the framing of the joint statement issued on that occasion in New Delhi. The statement used such expressions as "East Pakistan" and the "entire people of Pakistan." A careful reading of the statement however, would reveal that these expressions were used to facilitate a "political solution", of the problem and to avoid the impending war. According to Professor Hushbrook Williams research which was financed by the government of Pakistan, this joint statement was read in Islamabad as a Soviet move away from support for Bangladesh. But the things changed with the deepening of the crisis.

On October 27, the USSR and India released a statement under Article 9 of the Treaty of peace, Friendship and Cooperation, that declaring that both parties fully agreed that Pakistan was about to launch a war of aggression in the sub-continent. This statement was issued as

101. The Indian Express, August 12, 1971.
102. Hushbrook Williams, "The East Pakistan Tragedy", p.82.
N.P. Chiyubin, the Soviet foreign Minister who had come to New Delhi, left India for Moscow on the eve of Mrs. Gandhi's visit to Washington.

In an article in the London Times, Peter Jay wrote that Henry Kissinger was said to have told a visiting British statesman that he regarded India's "invasion" of East Bengal in the same light as Hitler's reoccupation of the Rhineland.104

In October, India received the report that Pakistan had evacuated civilian population along the border in the West and an unknown number of armoured and infantry divisions had moved up to the border adjoining Kashmir, Rajasthan and the Punjab. Pakistan had by then deployed 8 of her 15 divisions in the West and 5 in the East. India also moved her troops to the Western border and prepared herself to meet any threat of war.

India's Involvement Deepens

In the meantime the influx of refugees continued unabated and the burden of looking after about 10 million

of them (this number was put forth by India) proved too heavy for India. As the international community could not take effective steps to enable the refugees to return, India decided to take unilateral action. But before taking any action, the Prime Minister Mrs. Gandhi wanted to explain personally the realities of the situation to the leaders of the western countries and request them to restrain Pakistan from adopting further aggressive course. In October and November, 1971, she visited Belgium, Austria, the Federal Republic of Germany, Britain, the US and France. But the countries, Mrs. Gandhi visited did not take any concrete steps to stop India and Pakistan from drifting towards war. Her main target was the US which was as India thought in a position to restrain Pakistan and help India to solve the refugee problem. Equally perhaps her purpose was to isolate USA from her allies on Bangladesh issue.

During her tour Indira Gandhi also expressed her unhappiness over the indifference of some nations. She wanted the world to know that India would not tolerate the influx of hundreds of thousands of refugees. She made it clear to Pakistan's Western friends and donors that India was free to act in self-defence if they did not succeed in prevailing upon Yahya Khan to negotiate a settlement with Sheikh. Mrs. Gandhi had also not left the western leaders
in doubt that unless the Pakistani build up on India's borders was ended, India would continue the defensive alert.

When Mrs. Indira Gandhi returned to India on November 13, she informed some of her cabinet colleagues that Washington gave the impression that the US did not want to get involved in an India-Pakistan war. She gave out that before making any moves, India would await the outcome of the new diplomatic efforts by some of the countries she had visited. She also said that if the world leaders failed to provide a solution, India would be justified in taking steps to resolve the crisis and send back the refugees.

Despite Indira Gandhi's visit to the USA and other countries of the West, America did not seem to have taken any serious step towards the solution of the problem, although in a press conference in the White House on December 7, 1971, Dr. Kissinger claimed that two days before the war broke out, Washington had informed the Indian ambassador that it was prepared to discuss a precise time table for establishing political autonomy for East Pakistan and that at US urging the government of Pakistan had agreed: (i) that relief supplies should be distributed by international agencies, (ii) East Pakistan should be returned to civilian rule by the end of December, (iii) Pakistan should extend amnesty to all refugees, (iv) Pakistan should withdraw its troops
from East Pakistani positions bordering on India, (v) the US should establish contact with the Bangladesh movement and (vi) Pakistan should negotiate with followers of the imprisoned Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Dr. Kissinger announced that either he or Secretary of State Rogers had met with the Indian ambassador twenty-five times to facilitate a settlement and had conveyed the view to the Indian Government that the US favoured autonomy for East Pakistan. It was this briefing that prompted ambassador Kenneth Keating to cable from New Delhi on December 3, 1971 "I feel constrained to state that elements of this particular story do not coincide with my knowledge of the events of the past eight months." The US Foreign Policy report also admitted that there was no assurance of success in the political talks under way. The reality, therefore, seemed to be otherwise.

Less than a fortnight after Mrs. Gandhi's return from her foreign tour, United States applied the screw on India. Economic aid to India was cut off on the excuse that US public opinion "which had become impatient over India's refusal to defuse the situation" had to be assuaged. It means that even Mrs. Gandhi's visit failed to have the desired effect on the American policy towards Bangladesh crisis.

Yahya Khan, on his part, declared that he would himself go to the front to fight the war with India. He in a desperate exercise, through a high-powered delegation led by Bhutto asked China to give her fighter planes and increase war supplies. China was believed to have told Pakistan to act with restraint and work for a political solution. Pakistan won a declaration of support from China but failed to obtain any specific assurance of Chinese action in the event of war.

The stage was now set for the coming Indo-Pak war of December 1971 which resulted in the liberation of Bangladesh. But the US tried her level best to maintain status quo in the East Bengal. The main reason for this was that she thought as stated earlier that the liberation of Bangladesh under those circumstances and conditions would strengthen India and help the latter to assume a further predominant role in the region. The American ally, Pakistan (which had been used by the USA to contain India) would be weakened and thereby lose much of her power to contain India and to follow a foreign policy suitable to American designs.