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Preparation of State Language Movement in East Bengal in 1947

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ABSTRACT

From the very beginning of Pakistan's formation there was controversy between the Bangla-spoken and Urdu-spoken community created by Pakistan Central Government. After many meeting, movements and even sacrificing living lives, this controversy demand of state language, whether state language would be Bengali or Urdu was quite unable to come into conclusion. For the conspiracy of Pakistan Central Government Bengali language has been expelled from all sector and from Civil Service of Pakistan (C.S.P.). Dhaka University students and leaders of East Bengal tried their best but failed. This chapter discuss the activities of Tamaddun Majlish, leader of East Bengal and students of Dhaka University for the inclusion of Bengali language as a State language of East Bengal.

KEYWORDS: Bengali Language; Urdu Language; State Language; East Bengal; Pakistan.

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INTRODUCTION

A new state named Pakistan was born in the World-Map on 14th August, 1947. This province was called East Bengal situated on the eastern side of newly born Pakistan. Bengali community of East Bengal began to dream a new dream. Because, creation of Pakistan with East Bengal, Bengali community was deprived of getting a separate state only for Bengali-spoken people. That dream broke seed was hidden in the heart of Bengali community. As a result they were influenced gradually by a new nationalism and proceeded to language movement.

FORMATION OF TAMADDUN MAJLISH

A cultural organization was under the leadership of Md. AbulKasem named ‘TamaddunMajlish’ in Dhaka on 1st September, 1947.¹ At the beginning those who were associated with this organization, some of their names were :

1. Secretary : Prof. AbulKasem
2. Member : Abdul Khalique (Retired as I.G.P.)
3. Member : Poet MofakhKharul Islam
4. Member : FazlurRahamanBhuiya (Publicity Secretary, Former Student Council, S.M. Hall and then Advocate)
5. Member : SaiyedNazrul Islam (Then V.P. of S.M. Hall and then 1st Temporary President, Bangladesh)
6. Member : A.K.M. Ahasan (Retired as Secretary)
7. Member : SamsulAlam (Secretary, Social Welfare)²

Though Tamaddun Majlish at the beginning was simply a cultural organization but gradually for the demand of mother-tongue Bengali language, it entered directly in Pakistan politics. The East Pakistan Democratic Juba League called a Party Conference on 6th and 7th September, 1947 in Dhaka and accepted a proposal about mother-tongue Bengali language.³ Some important parts of the proposal was given below :

“...East Pakistan Worker Conference was proposing that Bengali language would be the medium of instruction and law-court language. What would be the whole Pakistan’s State Language should depend on public’s discussion and opinion for taking resolution. Public decision would be the final.”⁴

FIRST JOURNAL PUBLISHED BY TAMADDUN MAJLISH

TamaddunMajlish published a journal under the caption of “PakistanerRashtraBhasha Bangla Na Urdu” after two weeks of its formation by it’s own efforts.⁵ Articles written by many famous writers outside TamaddunMajlish were published in this booklet. They were Abul Mansur Ahmed and Dr. QaziMotahar Hossain.⁶ Among these one of the best article was written by Prof. AbulKasem. The important parts of his article headed by “AmaderProstab” were :

“...1. Only Bengali language would be :

(a) East Pakistan’s medium of instruction

(b) East Pakistan’s Court’s Language

(c) East Pakistan’s Official Language

2. Pakistan central government’s state language would be Urdu and Bengali

3. (a) Only Bengali would be the East Pakistan’s 1st language in education department. 100% of East Pakistan People would learn it.

(b) Urdu would be the second language. Those who serve a engage in other works in other parts of Pakistan would learn this language only. Higher classes of Madhyamik Schools should learn this as a language.

(c) English would be the 3rd language or international language. Those who would be employed as Pakistan employee or engaged for higher science studies in world countries should learn this language only. Their number must not be more than 100% of East Pakistan.

By the same rule 1st language Urdu, second language Bengali and 3rd language English would possess the language place in other provinces of Pakistan.

4. For the benefit of administration and science education East Pakistan’s administration would continue both in English and Bengali language for some year. In the mean time necessary Bengali language modification should continue. The language which the people can read, write, speak easily and shortly would be the

state language of that country. This irrefutable arguments was the basis of the Proposal written above. The English imperialism as the burdened English language upon us forcibly without taking any opinion, in the same way if Urdu or Bengali was burdened on the whole Pakistan the unjustifiable and imperialistic rule would be followed. This unscientific and unjustifiable attempt was found in some states. Really speaking shameful and might be called inferiority complex. It must be prohibited from all directions. A strong movement be made against it. As its introduction articles of famous writers were publishing and at the same time all East Pakistanis were inviting to attend the movement.

* A copy of resolution should be sent to Quid-e-Azam and other leaders inviting public meeting in every school, college and town, accepting proposal against the imposition of other language-burden upon us.

* Deputation should be made to all members of ‘GanaParisad’ to make them understand not to make the suicide way easy.

Quid-e-Azam recognized the self-control right in every province. Right of sovereignty and freedom was given every unit of Pakistan to select their state language even in Lahore Proposal.”⁷

Author and writer KaziMotaharHossain, Professor, Statistical Department, Dhaka University explained the importance of language for the development of newly born Pakistan in the second article of this magazine under the caption of ‘RastraVasha O PurbaPakistanerVashaSamasya’.According to his opinion, for which reason, the condition of Bengali Muslim Society was deteriorated, just like that of Bengali Muslim Society in newly born Pakistan would be the same. For this reason the Bengali language would be accepted as state language with Urdu also.⁸Besides this, Abul Mansur Ahmed written of 3rd article of this magazine, politician, author and ex-minister wrote an article under the caption of “Bangla VashaiHaibeAmaderRashtraVasha” was very important.⁹ Some parts of his article are as following :

“...1. A real democratic state would not be possible if mass and state language is not the same.

2. East Pakistani literate society will be illiterate and unfit within a very short-time if Urdu is granted as State-language. For the middle of 19th century British imperialism accepted English as a State Language replacing the French Language making the literate Bengali society illiterate and incompetent for government service with a short period of time.
3. Announcement is going on that Urdu would be the State Language and Bengali the medium of instruction is actually a deception and political fraud. Because the standard of life in every field will be measured by broadness and deepness of State Language knowledge.
4. It is only publicity that Urdu is more easy than Bengali. Actually Urdu is more difficult than Bengali.
5. Lakhnouvi alphabet printing and type writing is unfit for scientific works. Kolkata and Misari alphabet is wrong and frenzy and difficult to learn.
6. Bengali language is Sanskrit-touching and Hindu-influenced, this objection is purely false. It is not fit for Muslim culture. This is also a fraud and bluff. Bengali which we want to select as State Language is not “Grammar-Manzusha” language, if the words of mass-mouth.
7. We have no strong orthodoxy about the alphabet. If the Bengali language is proved incompetent by weighting in scientific machine *nikti* and if it does not attain the fitness by probable change, we are ready to take Roman alphabet. If the Urdu-Spoken people agree to accept the Roman alphabet instead of Arabi, it will be the great prayer for Muslim on behalf of Urdu.

Seven arguments that were written above, besides these, there are many, these have a great value in real life.

If the trial appears in GanaParishad for the eligibility and demand of Urdu-Bengali, there should be worthy and sufficient pleadery that attempt mainly would be done by the East Pakistani students. Because their responsibility is innumerable as intelligentsia of East Pakistan.”¹⁰

FIRST SEMINAR HELD IN EAST BENGAL ON DEMAND OF BENGALI LANGUAGE AS ONE OF THE STATE LANGUAGE

By the effort of TamaddunMajlish an informal seminar is performed in Government Intermediate College (now Dhaka College) in ‘Nupur Vila’, Student Hall on that day at 4 p.m.¹¹ So far as the information received, this is the 1st organized Seminar on demand of State-language Bangla. The particular came to an unity for the future deeds according to proclamation of article headed by “PakistanerRashtraVasha Bangla Na Urdu” in that Seminar.¹²The participants are :

President : Dr. Mohammed Shahidulla
Dr. KaziMotaharHossain (Physicist)
Prof. ShamsulHoque
Prof. AbulKasem
Prof. KaziAkramHossain (Historian)
Principal Ibrahim Khan
SanaullahNuri
Poet Jasimuddin
Shahed Ali.¹³

CONCLUSION

Just after the partition of attempts were began to accept Bengali language as one of the State Language of Pakistan and official language of East Bengal. Though no offence was there, because in the mean time conspiracy began to select Urdu language only the State Language of Pakistan. But Bengali language was mother tongue of 56.02% majority people of Pakistan. Pakistan central government should be energetic to select Bengali language as one of the State Language of whole Pakistan. But Pakistan central government began to make anxiety in this matter. Urdu was not the majority peoples mother tongue. No problem was there to accept Bengali language as a State language. Besides, East Pakistani Bengali community did not demand to select only Bengali language as State language of Pakistan. They only wanted Bengali language also as one of the State Language of Pakistan with Urdu.

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