

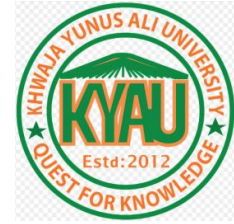
Khwaja Yunus Ali University Journal

Publisher homepage: www.kyau.edu.bd

OPEN ACCESS

ISSN: 2791-3759 (Online), 2521-3121 (Print)

Journal homepage: www.journal.kyau.edu.bd



Research Article

The Participation of Bengali Women in the 1969 Mass Uprising Against General Ayub's Military Rule: A Historical Analysis.

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Abstract

The state of Pakistan was born on the basis of the Lahore resolution of 1940. The resolution recognizes the granting of autonomy to the states of Pakistan. But after the establishment of Pakistan, the West Pakistani ruling class continued to exploit the East Pakistan province by not providing local autonomy but by establishing internal colonies. As a result, after the establishment of Pakistan, the East

Pakistani people started a movement demanding autonomy. Both men and women take part in these movements. One such movement was the mass uprising of 1969. Men as well as women participate in this movement and are able to achieve success in the movement. Therefore, the article presents the participation of Bengali women in the 1969 mass uprising against the military rule of General Ayub.

Keywords: Participation, Historical Analysis, Contribution, Military Rule, strike, Movement.

1. Introduction

The idea of Bengali men is that women are helpless and a burden on society. He was born to endure all the oppression and torture. But past history testifies that Bengali women have protested in need, fought with arms and sacrificed their lives for the country. Reviewing the history, it can be seen that during the British rule and during the rule of Pakistan, the Bengali women's society took active part in various movements and struggles. During the British rule, countless patriotic Suy children sacrificed their lives to free themselves from the shackles of subjugation. Every anti-British movement was attended by men as well as women. They also gave their lives for the

country. In the peasant movement of Bengal, the rural women of Bengal showed immense courage and determination to lead the social movement, in the resistance struggle and in the face of the enemy. In the thirties and forties of the twentieth century, when the peasant society of Bengal was oppressed by the police, zamindars and jotdars, women took part in various movements. That is why they form their own resistance forces. These women have become immortal in history by overcoming all obstacles and giving their lives in direct struggle with infinite courage. As a result of this struggle, 200 years of British rule in India came to an end and India was divided into two independent states, India and Pakistan. The Muslim-majority province of East

Bengal belonged to the state of Pakistan. However, even though the province of East Bengal was annexed to Pakistan, it remained subjugated. That is, after the establishment of Pakistan, the West Pakistani ruling class deprived the people of East Bengal of social, political and economic opportunities. As a result, the people of East Pakistan jumped into various anti-West Pakistan movements to demand autonomy. Men as well as women participate in these movements and struggles. From the second decade of the twentieth century, the thinking consciousness of Bengali women began to develop. Gradually they are aware of the rights. During the rule of Pakistan, they got involved in various movements against the West Pakistani rulers demanding autonomy. So this article explores the participation of Bengali women in the 1969 Non-Cooperation Movement against the military rule of General Ayub Khan.

2. Research Gaps

To date, no book has been published on the participation of Bengali women in the non-cooperation movement against the government of General Ayub Khan. Some of the books written on the liberation war of Bangladesh have discussed some issues from the general point of view regarding the participation of women in the non-cooperation movement. In other words, none of the published books discuss research on women's participation in the anti-Ayub non-cooperation movement. Therefore, I have written this article realizing the need for important research on the participation of Bengali women in the Non-Cooperation Movement of 1969 against the General Ayub Government. I hope this article will be useful in future research.

3. Research methods and data collection

Basically I collected data from primary sources. Newspapers and periodicals are important elements of the 1969 non-cooperation movement. Information has also been collected from various women's participation programs aired on Bangladesh Betar, BTV and BBC. Besides, I have collected information by participating in the meetings and gatherings of various women's organizations. To get information about the role of women in the non-cooperation movement against the Ayub government of 1969, I interviewed women who

were directly involved in the non-cooperation movement.

4. Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to examine the participation of Bengali women in various stages of the non-cooperation movement against the government of Pakistan. Despite the positional weakness, exploitation, backwardness, disrespect and deprivation in the society, Bengali women society participated in the movement by establishing various women's organizations under different political parties. Among the women participating in the movement were progressive ordinary women of various levels, including school, college and university students. Therefore, the purpose of writing this article is to analyze various aspects of the participation of Bengali women in the non-cooperation movement of 1969 against the injustice of General Ayub Khan's government.

5. Participation of Bengali women in the mass uprising of 1969

After the establishment of Pakistan, the Bengalis started a movement demanding autonomy. Men as well as women took part in making this movement a success. Their participation has become a milestone in the success of Bengalis. These women have taken up arms, fought, given their lives in need.

Women protesting Asaduzzaman's murder

When the mass struggle started with the mass awakening of 1969, women as well as men participated in the movement. When student leader Asaduzzaman was shot dead by the police on January 20, 1969 while participating in the movement, female students of Dhaka University and other educational institutions reacted immediately. The student leader of Rokeya Hall of Dhaka University declared, "We will build the world that Assad gave his life for. We will not cry." I will not cry. But tears can be seen in his eyes. In response, the women of Dhaka took to the streets and demanded an end to the Ayub regime and they vowed to continue the movement (Kamal, 1969).

Women protest police firing in Azimpur

At 9:40 a.m. on January 21, 1969, police and EPR opened fire on a crowd in front of the Azimpur Army Recruitment Center. One died on the spot. In protest, Eden College students began a protest inside the hostel. Crowds from all walks of life joined the procession as students marched in protest of police brutality. As the number of people in the procession gradually increased, the police recklessly lashed out at the procession. On the same day, Nilufar Yasmin and Shahadat Ara were seriously injured in a reckless baton charge by the police. Later they were treated in Ward No. 9 of Dhaka Medical College Hospital (Parveen, 2010).

Women's participation in the January 21 (1969) strike

The direct participation of the students set an example for the success of the January 21 strike. The students of Eden College participated in these strike. College authorities prevented students from participating in the procession. Even the gate of the hall closes. But ignoring the obstacles, they joined the procession and many were tortured by the police (Chowdhury, 1992). The East Pakistan government issued section 144 and declared all processions and meetings closed. But women came down the street in violation of section 144. Asaduzjan' sjanaza was held at Paltan Maidan. At the end of the janaza a mass procession was taken out so that people of different professions could join. At the forefront of the procession was an elderly mother from Islampur (The News, January 12, 1969).

Women's participation in the January 22 (1969) strike

On January 22, 1969, a silent procession led by women took to the streets of Dhaka. Women students of different educational institutions of Dhaka spontaneously participated in this procession. About ten thousand women participated in this procession. The procession protested against the rule of General Ayub Khan and demanded justice for the police brutality. The movement is promised to continue until the demands are met. Sufia Kamal, Begum Aziza Idris, Maleka Begum and Deepa Khandaker participated in the procession. The movement for their participation

spread further and ordinary housewives also took part in it spontaneously (Feldman, 1972).

Women's participation in the January 24 (1969) strike

A women's meeting was held on January 24 at Sufia Kamal's house. The meeting decided to hold a mourning procession in Dhaka city (Begum, 1989). On the same evening, a torch procession was taken out from Battala of Dhaka University. Women from different parts of Dhaka also joined the procession (Mohan, 1971). During the strike on January 24, 1969, a female college student named Taru Ahmed broke the police cordon with a black flag. As soon as the blockade was broken, millions of people took to the streets. On that day, a women's rally was held in the premises of Baitul Mukarram in support of 11 points. Mrs. Amena Begum and Sajeda Chowdhury addressed the women's gathering calling for unity on the basis of 11 points. At the same time, female students of the Dhaka Nursing School Student Parliament mourned the untimely death of Asaduzzaman and strongly protested the police brutality (Ziring, 1971).

Women's participation in the January 25 (1969) protest

On 25 January, a woman named Anwara Begum was shot dead by Army and EPR forces in Nakhhalpara. In protest, women in Dhaka staged a demonstration. In the procession they vibrated the highway. Men are also involved in the protests of women. As a result, the movement spread to all the alleys of Dhaka city. The government also started suppressing the movement. Numerous men and women were arrested that evening. Protesting against the arrest, the women staged a broom procession at night (Kamal, 1969). Meanwhile, female students of Eden College Hostel and students of Rokeya Hall of Dhaka University started withdrawing money for the convenience of conducting the movement. They secretly went from house to house collecting money from women and depositing it in the movement fund. Many women donate gold jewelry to the fund with cash (The News, February 2, 1969).

Women's participation in the February 4 (1969) meeting

On 4th February (1969) at 4 pm a meeting of women was held in Dhaka under the chairmanship of Begum Sufia Kamal. The meeting decided to convene a women's rally on 7 February. At the end of the rally it was decided to increase the protest procession (Banerjee,1969).Meanwhile, a women's rally was convened at the central Shaheed Minar on February 7 at 10 am to protest the killing of students and demand the establishment of democratic rights.20 prominent women of Dhaka issued a statement urging mothers and sisters to join the rally. The statement was signed by Begum Sufia Kamal, Amena Begum, Kamrunnahar Laili, JohraTajuddin, Khodeja Chowdhury, Rebecca Mohiuddin, Farida Zaman, Laila Karib, Badrunnesa Ahmed, Hurmatunnesa Wadud, Khaleda Khanam and others. Maleka Begum, Ayesha Khanam, HosneAra Begum, Umme Salma, Mahmuda Begum Chowdhury signed the memorandum on behalf of the female students (Parveen,2010).

Women's participation in the February 7 (1969) protest

On February 7, 1969, at ten o'clock in the morning, the largest women's protest procession of the commemorative period came out from the foot of the Shaheed Minar. Politically conscious women from all walks of life took part in the procession. As women marched across the city, students lined the streets, congratulating the procession with flowers and roses. Among the large number of prominent women who participated in the protest were: Begum Sufia Kamal, Amena Begum, AmenaMozaffar, Johra Tajuddin, Begum Badrunnesa Ahmed, Begum Matia Chowdhury, Begum Kamrunnahar, Begum Nurjahan Moshed, Begum Badrunnesa Ahmed, Begum Badrunnesa Ahmed, Aziza and MumtazAksad (Ahmed,1972). Among the female students participating in the protest were Maleka Begum, Ayesha Khanam, Hosne Ara Begum, Mahmuda Begum and others (The News, February8, 1969).On the same day, students of Kamrunnesa Girls 'School and Bangla Bazar Girls' School staged a protest procession on the streets of Dhaka. They supported the 11-point demand and chanted slogans demanding the release of political prisoners

(Moniruzzaman,1975).Awami League leader Mrs. Amena Begum Rajshahi University teacher Dr. Shamsuzzoha issued a statement in the newspaper condemning the killing of other students and the imposition of curfew in different parts of the country (The News, February21, 1969). Awami League leader Mrs. Nurjahan Moshed formed a strong women's resistance movement with her mother and sisters in the wake of Ayub Khan's student-teacher massacre during the mass uprising of 1971 and demanded withdrawal of the Agartala conspiracy case (Mrs. Nurjahan Moshad, October 20,1998).

Fauzia Moslem joined the student union in 1964 when she was a first year student of Dhaka Medical College. He was later elected Vice-Chairman of the Central Committee. Since 1969 he has been active in all programs of the student and national movement. She organized picketing rallies, formed women's struggle committees in the area and organized a movement for the release of political prisoners (Fouzia Moslem, November 2,1997).

Women's position against release of Sheikh Mujib on parole

Begum Fazilatunnesa Mujib played an important role in the 1969 uprising. At the height of the agitation in the last phase of the Agartala case, General Ayub Khan convened a roundtable meeting with the leaders of all the political parties to resolve the existing problems of the country. Ayub Khan announced the release of Sheikh Mujib on parole to control the situation from the meeting. But Begum Fazilatunnesa took a stand against the release of Sheikh Mujib on parole and urged the government to release him without any delay (Daily Janakantha, March, 26,1997). Begum Mujib met Bangabandhu in the cantonment jail and forbade him to be released on parole(Malik,1992). Begum Mujib's strong morale of that day made Bangabandhu more strong and rebellious. Sheikh Mujib rejected the offer of parole. As a result, General Ayub withdrew the Agartala case and was forced to release Sheikh Mujib (Daily Janakantha, March, 26, 1997).

6. Participation of women in different district towns outside Dhaka

General Ayub Khan filed the Agartala conspiracy case in 1968 to stop Bangabandhu's 6 point demand movement of 1966. The case was filed alleging that Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib had planned to separate East Pakistan from the state of Pakistan through conspiracy. 35 people including Bangabandhu were arrested in the case. With the arrest of Bangabandhu movement started all over the country. In 1969 this movement took the form of mass uprising. Eventually this movement spread all over Bengal. The mass uprising of 1969 against General Ayub was confined to the city of Dhaka. It gradually spread from Dhaka to the entire district town and from district to Thana town and from Thana to village (Mehrish,1972).The following is a discussion of women's participation in the movement in district cities.

Khulna district: In protest of Bangabandhu's arrest on 27 January 1969, the students of Khulna Mahila College boycotted the class for one day and also laid wreaths at the Shaheed Minar to pay their respects to the martyrs and then observed two minutes of silence (The News, February 1,1969).Procession-meeting is going on every day in Khulna city in protest of Agartala conspiracy case. People from all walks of life take part in this procession-meeting. The movement is also going on in the face of police obstruction. Police fired in the procession to prevent movement. So on 10 and 11 February 1969, women marched in protest of the police firing. Female school-college students took part in the procession. The procession marched around the main roads of Khulna and chanted anti-Ayub slogans. The slogan called for withdrawal of Agartala case and release of all political prisoners including Bangabandhu (The News, February 11, 1969).On 14 February 1969, the students of Khulna Mahila Mahavidyalaya, led by Shirin Banu and Nasima Begum, took oath at the Shaheed Minar to implement the 11 points of Sangrami ChhatraParishad. Then they took out a procession. On 15 February (1969) in the suburbs of Khulna, hundreds of women marched with placards, posters and black flags. From the procession they called on the Ayub government to resign (The News, February 14,1969).

Jessore district: On 11 February (1969) a strike was observed in all educational institutions on the call of Jessore District Student Struggle Council. At 11 o'clock in the afternoon, a procession with the students of different schools and colleges, including the women's college, came out. The procession toured the main roads of the city. Hundreds of people standing on both sides of the main road threw flowers at the procession in support of the movement. Hundreds of women from houses on both sides of the road applauded and supported the procession(Karim,1977).

On 20 February 1969, about 300 women, led by Jinnatunnesa, president of the Jessore Women's Association, staged a protest against the assassination of Rajshahi University Proctor Dr. Shamsuzzohar. After the protest, housewives of Jessore and all school and college students gathered at Eidgah Maidan and sharply criticized the government's repressive policy. Khaleda Begum, Nilufar Begum, students of Jessore Women's College, Mrs. Meena Begum of Seba Sangha Girls' School and Shawkat Ara Siddiqui and Faizunnesa Siddiqui Agnijhara spoke on behalf of other women (Parveen,2010).

Begum Ashrafunnesa of Jessore played an important role in the mass uprising of 1969. At this time he resigned from the government service and joined the mass movement. Since then he has been actively involved in journalism and political activities. Jahan Sathi, daughter of Shaheed Mosharraf Hossain, Saleha Begum, Firoza Begum and others were with him at that time. When the student leader Asaduzzaman was killed, they accepted the condemnation motion through a procession meeting (Muhith,1978).

Chittagong district: On 27 January 1969 a strike was observed in Chittagong on the call of the Student Struggle Council and an all-party student meeting was held on the premises of Law College.Among the women who spoke at the meeting were KhaledaKhanam, Dina Jahed and Hamida Chowdhury. They all withdrew the Agartala conspiracy case and called on General Ayub Khan to release all political prisoners (Rahman, 1993).On 28 January 1969, a huge procession of female students headed by Khaleda Khanam came out to celebrate Black Day in Chittagong. TasminAra, Rasheda Khanam, Hannana Begum, Mumtaz Begum, NazmaAra Begum, Raushan

Ara Begum, Schoolgirl Nishat Parveen, Dina Jahed, Sabera Shabnam, Nazneen Jahan, Ayesha Begum, Shirin Kamal and others spoke in this meeting (Paul,1972).In 1969, Begum Mushtari Shafi of Chittagong took an active part in the Non-Cooperation Movement. During this time he participated in various meetings and processions and called for the resignation of General Ayub Khan (Parveen,2010).

Sylhet District: On 28 January, the women of Sylhet staged a rally to protest the torture, shooting and killing, and they marched through the city's main thoroughfares. The procession met at a public meeting on the basis of the students' 11-point demand. Begum Farid Ghazi, mother of Convention Muslim League MNA Moazzem Hossain and other prominent women participated in the procession. The meeting was chaired by Eliza Siraj (Parveen,2010).On 27th January 1969 a meeting of about 500 women was held in Habiganj. General Ayub Khan's persecution was criticized from the meeting. At the end of the procession a meeting was held under the chairmanship of Mrs. Jahanara Begum. The meeting called for the restoration of democracy in the country and observed a two-minute silence for the souls of the slain martyrs (The News, February 8, 1969).On the afternoon of February 1, 1969, a large procession of women marched in Sylhet to protest the government's crackdown. The procession traversed the city's main thoroughfares (Ali,1970).

Narsingdi district: On 15 February 1969, about 500 school-college students and housewives staged a historic procession in Narsingdi. At the end of the procession, they met at a meeting at the local Jinnah Park led by Nurjahan Begum. Yuthika Chatterjee, Piari Begum, Aarti Chakraborty, Ayesha Begum, Shirin, Dolan and Tahera addressed the meeting (The News, February 3, 1969).

Jalpur district: On 29 January, women in Jamalpur staged a huge protest against the police firing, student killings, massacres, torture, repression and mass arrests.The procession demanded the resignation of Ayub Khan and promised to continue the movement till Bangabandhu was released. So the women in Jamalpur continued their agitation till the Agartala conspiracy case was withdrawn (Moraes,1971).

Tangail District: Police opened fire on a procession in Tangail on February 6, 1969, injuring several people. All educational institutions, including Rajshahi University and Women's College, went on strike in protest of the police brutality. The procession circled the city's main thoroughfares. At the end of the procession is a meeting. The women leaders present at the meeting aroused the crowd with their anti-Ayub Khan speeches (Rao,1971).On 15th February, thousands of female students of Mirzapur Bharateshwari Homes in Tangail staged a huge mourning procession (The News, February 15, 1969).

Rangpur district: On 2 February 1969, the women of Rangpur staged a protest rally against the government's policy of harassment. On that day, 300 women wearing black badges marched in the streets of Rangpur and chanted slogans. This means that the women of Rangpur were politically aware (Allana, 1978). On February 2, 1969, a massive procession of about a thousand female students from various educational institutions marched out in protest against the police brutality in Syedpur. In the procession, women carry anti-government placards. Syedpur railway employees join the procession. They wear black badges and chant various official slogans (The News, February 2, 1969).

On 12 February 1969, on the occasion of Oath Day in Dinajpur, female students of local Women's College and Sardeshwari Gals School marched through the city streets in procession and took oath to demand 11 points (Parveen,2010).

Rajshahi district: On 1 March 1969, a large procession led by Mrs. Johar marched in Rajshahi to protest against the assassination of Dr. Shamsuzzahar, a reader at Rajshahi University. The procession ended from the local Shaheed Minar to the tomb of Dr. Shamsuzzahar. The procession marched barefoot and carried black flags. They later met in a meeting and paid deep homage to the memory of Dr. Shamsuzzahar (The Azad, March 2, 1969).Professor Jinnatun Nesa Talukder participated in the mass movement held in Rajshahi and led the procession meeting of the student league (Jinnatun Nesa'sinterview, November 10,1997).On 19 February 1969, a huge procession of teachers and students came out in different educational institutions of Ishwadi to protest against the

assassination of Dr. Johar. About 700 women participated in this procession (Mankeker, 1971).

Brakshanbaria district: Mumtaz Begum Rokeya of Kasba area of Brakshanbaria played an active role in the 11-point student movement and the 1969 mass movement as the president of the student league branch and a member of the central working committee of the East Pakistan Students League. She participated in almost every meeting and procession (Mitter,1971).

Patuakhali district: Monwara Begum Manu of Patuakhali became the president of the school branch of Chhatra League during the mass upris. An arrest warrant was issued in their name for violating section 144 in the 11-point movement.ing of 1969 and politically motivated everyone(Safiullah,1990).

Sunamganj district: Dipali Chakraborty of Sunamganj was directly involved in the student movement during the 1969 mass uprising. At that time, lesser meetings of student unions were held in different police stations of Sunamganj subdivision. He organized the movement with speeches at the meeting (Singh,1976).

7. Conclusion

The participation of women in various stages of the movement against the Pakistani regime was significant. Despite the positional weakness, exploitation, backwardness, disrespect and disenfranchisement of women in the society, women actively participated along with men in every movement of Pakistan period from different political parties or by establishing different women's organizations. Among the women who took part in all these movements were progressive women of various levels including school-college and university students. It is noteworthy that since the fifties, women have come forward in politics in an organized manner through organizations. As a result, through these organizations; women have played a leading role in protecting the interests of the country through their active participation in the political crisis of the country. The participation of Bengali women in the days of mass uprising of 1969 was significant in this regard. They took part in various procession meetings

demanding judicial inquiry into student killings, release of political prisoners, and withdrawal of Agartala conspiracy case and vowed to continue the movement for democratic rights. As a result, the military ruler General Ayub Khan was forced to relinquish power. Therefore, the participation of men as well as women in the mass uprising of 1969 deserves praise.

8. Acknowledgement

We are very much grateful to Md. Shaon Akter, Former Lecturer, Department of English, Khawaja Yunus Ali University for his valuable suggestion and guideline.

9. Conflicts Of Interest: The author's declared there are no conflicts of interest to publish it.

10. Author Contribution

This paper will be the core source belonging to the area of the participation of Bengali Women in the 1969 mass uprising against General Ayub's military rule and the reference for future researchers to do research in this field.

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Interview

- Mrs., NurjahanMoshad's interview on October 20, 1998.
- Fouzia Moslem's interview on November 2,1997.
- JinnatunNesa's interview on November 10, 1997.

News Paper

- a)The News, b) The Azad, c) Daily Ittefaq, d) Daily Janakantha, e) Daily Desh, f) The Sunday, g) Weekly Bichitra

Citation: Karim MR and Sharif MY. (2022). The Participation of Bengali Women in the 1969 Mass Uprising Against General Ayub's Military Rule: A Historical Analysis. *KYAU Journal*.5(1):98-105