

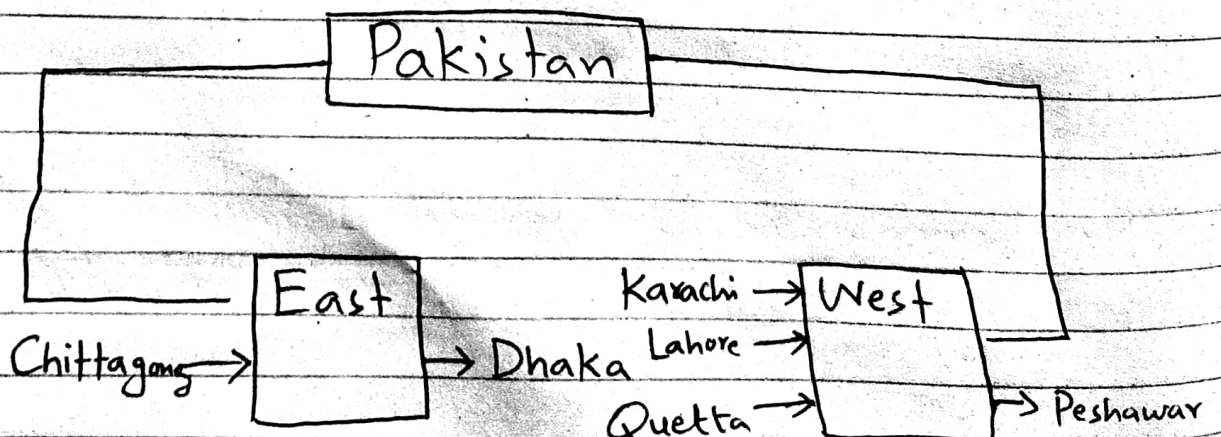
Q. East Pakistan was the Test of Pakistani Leadership. Discuss

1) Introduction :

Pakistan achieved independence in 1947. The country was divided into East and West wings which did not share direct boundary with the East. Both the wings were adjoined in such a way that is an exception. East and West were different in socio-political and economic realms. The ethnic heterogeneity, demand of provincial autonomy, among others, were reasons that were surely a test case for the Pakistani leadership. Later, 1970 Elections and the subsequent events further necessitated prudence in terms of leadership. However history suggests that the Pakistani leadership ^{greatly} failed to dispense prudent leadership.

2) Geographical division of Pakistan after 1947.

The state of Pakistan was divided into two wings, East and West.



3) How East Pakistan was the Test of Pakistani leadership :

After the establishment of Pakistan, Karachi became the capital. With the emergence of Karachi as the capital, the city became a hotspot of political development. However, geographical noncontiguous wings of Pakistan ~~was~~ coupled with other socio-political problems demanded leadership skill. Hence, ~~the~~ East Pakistan was a test because :

a) Ethnic heterogeneity :

East Pakistanis were mainly the Bengalis. They were different in terms of culture and this ethnic heterogeneity required a different approach towards settling the differences.

b) Difference of language :

The majority of the East Pakistanis were Bengalis. They were different also in language. The West Pakistanis mainly favoured Urdu. However, the Bengalis demanded recognition of Bengali as the national language.

c) Geographical disunity :

The writer of Prisoner of Geography writes that geography plays pivotal role in shaping power and structure of a state. The geographical disunity of East and West wings demanded a different approach to keep the public amalgamated.

d) Demand for provincial autonomy :

The majority of the East Pakistan's leadership demanded provincial autonomy, according to Hamid Khan's, Constitutional and Political History of Pakistan, book. However, the West Pakistan's leadership favoured strengthening the centre.

e) Emergence of different political forces in both these wings :

Another exception was that the political leadership in both wings were different.

In East wing, the elections of 1954-55 resulted in triumph of the United Front.

This result waned the position of the Muslim League. Similarly, in the West, political parties like Khudai Khidmatgar in the NWFP and the Muslim League and other religious parties gave birth to new political forces.

These new political parties ~~demanded~~ with different ideologies were required to establish unity.

4) Test of Pakistani leadership after 1970 Elections :

The year 1970 is significant in the history of East and West wings. The result of elections in 1970 engendered new dilemmas.

a) The Awami League as the winner in East Pakistan :

In the 1970 elections, the Awami

League claimed overwhelming success in East Pakistan. However, it failed to secure a single seat in West Pakistan.

b) The People's Party as successful in the West:

In West Pakistan, the Pakistan People's Party garnered considerable success in the elections. However, it failed to win a single seat in the East.

c) Eruption of deadlock between the East and the West:

Ideally, the Awami League should have joined the National Assembly, but it could not join. The result created deadlock on the transfer of power due to various reasons.

i) The East Pakistan's leadership was reluctant to change its position on Six points demand:

The Six Point presented by the Awami League required the centre to be a toothless body. In fact, Lan Talbot in his book Pakistan: A Modern History writes that the demands like raising ^{coin} currency and abolition of currency exchange from East to West and financial demands were very harsh. The demands could have been changed to make a federation like in the US. However, the East's leadership's

harsh stance fuelled apprehensions of the West, according to Dr. Hassan Askari's, *The Military and Politics in Pakistan*.

ii) Reluctancy of the Western political forces to share power:

Lan Talbot writes that Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's rather assertive attitude further escalated the situation. The People's Party refused to join the Parliament if ~~the~~ the Awami League was allowed to run the Parliament.

iii) Military leadership's failure to summon the session.

According to the LFO 1970, the President was required to summon session of the Parliament. However, the military ruler General Yahya failed to summon session of the Parliament in the due course of time.

iv) Military's crackdown in East Pakistan created chaos.

In order to suppress the civil war, the military opened crackdown on the situation in East Pakistan. The use of force aggravated the situation and resulted in direct confrontation of the military with Paramilitary forces in Bengal and the Mukhti Bahini. This, according to Sisson and Rose, was the last nail in the coffin.

5) Failure of leadership :

These development cummulativey suggest that the leadership was failed in the case of East Pakistan. Resultantly, on 16 Dec 1971 Pakistan lost its territory and East Pakistan became Bangladesh.