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Women in Bangla Language Movement: Unsung Heroes

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Abstract: The iconic Language Movement holds great significance in the history of Bengal as well as the globe at large. During this milestone event, the Bengali women had united with the men to take part in the movement crossing the boundary of conservative society. Sufia Ahmed (1932-2020), Rawshan Ara Bachchu (1932-2019) and other women tirelessly took part in various meetings, processions and relevant actions. By the beginning of 1952, the Language Movement took a serious turn. On 21 February the students were determined to violate Section 144 imposed by the government. When the male and female students emerged in groups, shouting slogans, the police resorted to baton charge; even the female students were not excluded. Through a long and hard struggle Bangla language got the status of national language. Simultaneously, the success of the Language Movement greatly increased the self-confidence of women. As a result, women bravely participated in various national agitations that took place later. Moreover, the objective of the research is to analyze how the Bengali women broke the long-standing paternalistic conservatism and got involved in the Language Movement inspired by nationalism. Through this movement tried to uncover the cultural awareness as well as the nature of Bengali women's

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progress. It should be mentioned that Analytical method has been followed to prepare this research work.

Keywords: Agitation, Conservatism, Memorandum, Baton charge, Commemoration, Dodged.

Introduction

The role of Language Movement in the creation of Bengali nationalism is undeniable. Bangla is mother tongue and life language of Bengali. After the partition of the country in 1947, the ruling group of Pakistan tried to impose Urdu as the state language on the people of East Pakistan. For this reason, the national movement to establish the mother tongue as the state language began to take root. Women also actively participated in this movement shoulder to shoulder with men. Since the beginning of the 20th century, an unforgettable awakening took place in the life of Bengali women. Since then, women have not remained behind in times of calamity, crisis, but have participated in the struggle simultaneously and equally with men. With this courage and promise, women have bravely come forward to protect the mother tongue. Sufia Ahmed and Rawshan Ara Bachchu are among the women who played an adventurous role in the front line of the Language Movement crossing the barriers of the conservatism. They joined spontaneously in meetings, processions, fundraising and various activities to conduct the movement. They even accepted police torture by violating Article 144 on February 21, 1952 and continued their struggle until official status of Bangla language was obtained. In the discussion article, an attempt has been made to analyze the reasons for the participation of Sufia Ahmed, Rawshan Ara

Bachchu and other women in the Language Movement, the pattern and role of their participation in the agitation and above all its importance in history.

Objectives of the Research

The objective of the research is to analyze how the Bengali women broke the long-standing paternalistic conservatism and got involved in the Language Movement inspired by nationalism. Through this movement tried to uncover the cultural awareness and the nature of Bengali women progress. To determine the extent to which the success of this struggle affects the women's emancipation movement in Bengal. Above all, to make the current women society more aware by learning lesson from this movement.

Literature Review

Very few esteemed scholars are discussed on women's participation in Bangla Language Movement. For instance, *Bengali Language Movement and Creation of Bangladesh* (Dhaka, 2011) by Anwar Dil and Afia Dil, *Vasha Andoloner Itihas* (Dhaka 2015) by Rafiq Ahmed, *Vasha Andoloner Itihas* (2003) by Bashir al Helal, *Purbo Banglar Vasha Andolon o Totkalin Rajniti* (1995) by Badruddin Umar and so on. These books are the significant source of knowledge regarding the Language Movement in Bengal. But, there is no scholars particularly analyze on the essential contribution of women in Bangla Language Movement. Therefore, this is the research gap here. Women's society participated in the Language Movement as the front-liner soldiers. Many of them were behind the scene. At large they did not get their proper national and historical

recognition. This article has been prepared realizing the need for research on women in present Bangladesh.

Research Methodology

Contemporary newspapers, autobiographies and interviews of women concerned have been used as primary sources in writing the article and a range of informative writings written by modern researchers have been used as secondary sources. It should be noted that the analytical research method widely used in humanities and sociology studies has been followed in writing the article. This article focuses on the analysis of the data and information obtained from the interviews as well as different sources.

Historical Background of the Study and Women's Involvement in various events

In the context of the Language Movement, after the partition of the country in 1947, the ruling group declared Pakistan as an Islamic state. Urdu was given the status of an Islamic language as the sole state language of the entire people. A strategic decision was imposed towards the people (Dil & Dil, 2011). It is very easy for the Bangla speaking people to understand that the imposition of Urdu language is nothing but a conspiratorial ploy by the Pakistan government. Then Dr. Muhammad Shahidullah (1885-1969) demanded recognition of Bangla as the state language of this country through his writings. Kazi Motahar Hossain (1897-1981), Muhammad Enamul Haque (1902-1982) and Abul Mansur Ahmad strengthened this demand. Rawshan Ara Bachchu (Interview, March 13, 2018). As a result, writings on the language question started in contemporary newspapers. Note that in 1947, an editorial in *Begum* periodical demanded

to make Bangla the national language. In an article entitled “National Language of Pakistan”, Mohsena Islam advocated making Bangla the national language (Begum Patrika, 1947: 4)

In November 1947, East Pakistan’s writers, artists, journalists, academicians, philanthropists and high-ranking government officials submitted a memorandum to the then Prime Minister demanding Bangla as the state language of East Pakistan. It must be emphasized that the editor of *Jayashree Patrika*, Leela Nag (1900-1970) and *Nikhil Bangla Muslim Women Association* editor Anowara Chowdhury signed the memorandum (Kabir, 2014). Thus, the role of men as well as women in the question of national language was observed from the beginning. On January 11, 1948, when Abdur Rab Nishtar (1899-1958), the minister of transport and communications of the government of Pakistan, visited Sylhet on an official visit, the student society there gave a written letter demanding Bangla as the state language (Sufia, 2016). It should be pointed out that a memorandum containing the demand to make Bangla the state language signed by Sylhet *Mahila Muslim League* district committee president Jobeda Khatun Chowdhury, vice president Syeda Shahera Banu, secretary Syeda Lutfunnesa Khatun, Syeda Najibunnessa Khatun, Rabeya Khatun and many more women was sent to East Pakistan chief minister Khawaja Nazimuddin (1894-1964). (Amin, 2010).

Inversely, on February 23, 1948, Dhirendranath Dutta, the representative of East Bengal in the Pakistan *Gana Parishad* proposed to use Bangla as one of the main languages of the *Gana Parishad* along with Urdu and English (Umar, 1995). But the leader of the *Gana Parishad* and the prime minister of the central government, Liaquat Ali Khan (1895-1951), rejected this demand. On March 2, 1948, the *Rashtra Bhasha Karma*

Parishad was formed in the premises of Dhaka University consisting of students, intellectuals, cultural and political workers (Sufia, 2016). In the same year on March 21, the governor general of Pakistan Mohammad Ali Jinnah in a large public meeting at the *Race Course Maidan* in Dhaka, declared “But let me make it very clear to you the state language of Pakistan is going to be Urdu and no other Language” (Mukul, 2014). He uttered these words again in the convocation speech held at Curzon Hall of Dhaka University on March 24 (Khanam, 2015). As a result, on 11 March 1948, a general strike was observed throughout East Pakistan. Many students participated in the strike and picketed. Begzadi Mahmuda Nasir, Laila Arjumand Banu, Mumtaz Begum, Sultana Razia, Afroza, Lily Khan, Khaleda Khanum and Maleka Begum participated in the strike in East Pakistan along with the men. Lulu Bilquis Banu, Mehrunnisa, Dil Afroz, Laila, Shamsun Nahar and other brave women participated in the picketing. Note that this was the first public movement of women held in Dhaka (Kabir, 2014).

In December 1949, the government had to cancel the decision of the education minister to write Bangla in Arabic script in the face of great pressure. Bengali women started organizing with men. In this connection Maleka Begum mentioned,

Sufia Kamal and some members of the *Wari Mahila Samiti*, led by Leela Nag, worked in horse-drawn carts, sometimes on foot, to prevent communal riots in Dhaka in 1950. Through these works, the women of Dhaka began to organize themselves with new zeal in forming associations. Juiful Roy took the initiative to reorganize the ‘East Pakistan Women’s Association’ (Begum, 1989).

Meanwhile, Leela Nag, Sufia Kamal and Lutfunnesa tried to prevent riots by visiting different areas of Dhaka and Narayanganj. On the other hand, Kamrun Nahar Laili, Fatema

Khatun, Samina Khatun, Halima Khatun (all were progressive students of Dhaka University) and other leaders such as Nurjahan Murshid, Rokeya Rahman Kabir, Begum Mohiuddin, Raisa Haroon worked to organize women in the anti-Pakistani movement (Hossain, 2006). In 1951, *Dhaka University Sangram Parishad* was formed.

Women in the Language Movement in 1952

On January 27, 1952, Prime Minister Khawaja Nazimuddin announced the decision to make Urdu the state language in a speech at Dhaka's *Paltan Maidan* (Dil & Dil, 2011). An all-party meeting was convened on 31 January 1952 at the Bar Library of Dhaka. The then student of *Eden Mohila College* Mahbuba Khatun attended this meeting and she said, "Girls will sacrifice their blood if necessary to accept the demand of making Bangla the state language" (Umar, 1988). *Sarbadaliya Rashtravasha Sangram Parishad* was formed to determine the next course of action, one of whose members was Anowara Khatun, Member of the legislative council of East Pakistan (Ahad, 2004). Sufia Ahmed and Rawshan Ara Bachchu were in direct contact with prominent members of this council.

Basically, Sufia Ahmed¹ and Rawshan Ara Bachchu² are among the women who played an effective role in the forefront of the Language Movement of 1952. Both of them were students of Dhaka University during the historical Language Movement. Meanwhile, they went to different educational institutions and organized the students to ensure their participation in the Language Movement. They participated in strikes, meetings and marches to make the movement a success. They have also collected money from neighborhoods to meet the expenses of conducting the movement. Regarding the reasons for participating in the Language Movement, Sufia Ahmed mentioned,

I participated in the Language Movement of 1952 because of my conscience. For the need to protect the dignity of the mother tongue as well as independent existence of the Bengali nation. Like everyone I had an innate attraction towards mother tongue. There was no political or party reason behind it. After getting admission in the University of Dhaka, the demand to make Bangla the national language naturally crossed my mind as a conscious student. This demand agitated the entire student society. Sufia Ahmed (Interview, October 7, 2017).

On the contrary, Rawshan Ara Bachchu said in the commemoration of her participation in Language Movement,

Participating in the great Language Movement during my studies at Dhaka University is the glorious chapter of my life. ... Actively participate in the Language Movement motivated by the sense of nationalism. This is the movement with self-confidence to establish the mother tongue in self-respect. Rawshan Ara Bachchu (Interview, March 13, 2018).

In fact, there was no specific political motive behind the participation of Bengali women in the Language Movement. They are motivated by cultural consciousness and feel the urge to protect their mother tongue and own culture. The sense of nationalism among Bengali women is noticeable at this time.

On February 4, strikes, meetings and processions were held. Black Flag Day was observed in East Pakistan from 11 to 13 February. Rawshan Ara Bachchu (Interview, March 13, 2018). Plans were made to encircle the East Pakistan legislative council on 21 February with a province-wide strike as well as student strike. Women play a strong role in the implementation of this plan. Incidentally, Sufia Ahmed mentioned in the commemoration,

About two weeks before of 21 February we started preparing for the strike. Among my classmates and colleagues in the

movement were Khorsedi Alam Doli, left-wing female journalist Laila Samad, Dr. Shafia Khatun and Sara Taifur. In order to organize the students, we campaigned in *Anandamoyi Girl's School*, *Kamrunnesa Girl's School*, *Bangla Bazar Girl's School* and *Eden Mohila College* in Dhaka. Everywhere we got a huge response and we were convinced that the strike program would be a total success. Sufia Ahmed (Interview, October 7, 2017).

The Pakistani government imposed Section 144 on the entire city of Dhaka on 20 February. On the night of February 20, members of *Rashtra Bhasha Sangram Parishad* took a strict decision to violate Article 144. On February 21, 1952, a large public meeting was held in *Amtala*, arts building, Dhaka University (now the emergency department of *Dhaka Medical College Hospital*). The university students collected agitators from various girl's school on foot. Sufia Ahmed brought the girls of *Anandamoyi* and *Banglabazar schools* together to *Amtala*. Sufia Ahmed reminiscingly mentioned,

On the way to enter this public meeting, when I met my former acquaintance, the then SP of Dhaka, Masud Mahmud, he advised me to go back home. The government has ordered the police administration to suppress the protestors with strict hands. So, I may be in danger. But I joined the public meeting without heeding his words. Sufia Ahmed (Interview, October 7, 2017).

It is noted that the then vice chancellor of Dhaka University Syed Moazzem Hossain along with proctor professor Mozaffar Ahmed, dean Zuberi and Dr. Newman, he came to the *Amtala* public meeting that day and requested the students not to violate Article 144. Ignoring the prohibition of the administration, the indomitable youth decided to take out a procession in groups of 10, each with a girl in the front, in the face of resistance from the police. Sufia Ahmed uttered,

The first group of girls headed by Shafia Khatun, Shamsun Nahar, Rawshan Ara Bachchu, me (Sufia Ahmed), Sara Taifur and a girl from *Eden College* (name not known) went ahead. The objective was to proceed towards the legislative council of East Bengal and present the demands to the Members of the Parliament. But as soon as we crossed the police barricade, we were dispersed as the police batons and fired tear gas. At this time several other groups of girls came out and faced similar obstacles. We all get hurt. Sufia Ahmed (Interview, October 7, 2017).

On that day, everyone was more or less injured as well as tears started pouring out of their eyes due to tear gas. Sufia Ahmed with her companions took shelter in the flower garden by climbing the wire fence of the residence of Osman Gani (Provost of S.M Hall) and washed their eyes and faces with cold water. After recovering a bit, they proceeded towards Dhaka Medical College for first aid in the afternoon. At this time, people poured into the streets. The crowd erupted into protest mainly against the police attack on the students. Rawshan Ara Bachchu (Interview, March 13, 2018).

Rawshan Ara Bachchu was one of the women who violated Section 144 on 21 February. She said, the students divided into different groups and gathered the students of *Kamrunnesa Girl's School, Banglabazar Girl's School* and *Eden Mohila College at Amtala*. But the social system of that time was very conservative. Girls did not have the opportunity to roam freely everywhere. She mentioned in this context,

While the Language Movement is at its peak on February 21, university students will face social barriers. University authorities will expel them from departments and halls or parents will stop their studies. Girls ignored everything and joined the Language Movement on an equal footing with the struggling brothers. Rawshan Ara Bachchu (Interview, March 13, 2018).

Some students including Sufia Khatun, Sufia Ali, Bebi, Rokeya and more used to secretly attend many meetings and give their well-thought-out opinions about the strategy of conducting the movement. Again, many girls including Nurunnahar Kabir used to stay up all night to write posters for the movement. Rawshan Ara Bachchu (Interview, March 13, 2018). Rawshan Ara Bachchu stated regarding her strong participation in violating Section 144,

That day I went out in the third group. My conviction is, I will break the barricade of the stick. I hold the police baton in front of me tightly with both hands and push it back and forth. Thus at one point the stick barricade was broken. Immediately the police baton charge started. I was not spared from this either. In the tear shell, the surroundings become dark. Eyes were watering. The city of Dhaka shook with the slogans of the aggrieved people, “we want Bangla as the national language”, “we want the release of the royal prisoners”, “Police oppression should be stopped”, “Let’s go, let’s go to the assembly” and so on. Rawshan Ara Bachchu (Interview, March 13, 2018).

She dodged police tear shells and ran across the barbed wire fence and entered the house of the provost of Salimullah Muslim Hall, where Sufia Ahmed and other women activists had also taken shelter. Clashes between the student mob and the police then escalated, with the police firing incessantly. A large number of students were injured. It is marked that the session of Constituent Assembly was going on at the time of firing in the procession on 21 February 1952, the news reached here. Therefore, Maulana Abdur Rashid Tarkabagish raised the demand that the shooting should be investigated. Then Anowara Khatun gave a clear speech demanding justice for the shooting. After a heated argument with speaker Abdul Karim, 35 members including Anowara Khatun walked out of the council chamber.

In this way, women set an example of bravery in the Constituent Assembly that day (Hossain, 2016).

Language soldier Halima Begum pushed police rifles and marched forward shouting slogans. She was not deterred by the police baton charge and tear gas attack. Meanwhile, the police opened fire and Rafiq's skull was blown off by the bullets (Hossain, 2016). Noted, Rafiq was the first martyr of the great Language Movement. Gradually Salam, Barkat and Jabbar were martyred. Many girls went to the hospital to donate blood as well as nurses served the wounded. It must be noted, Nadera Begum, leader of *Women's Communist Party*, inspired the participation actively of women in the movement. The contribution of Nadera Begum to Language Movement is unparalleled.

On February 22, strikes, marches and protests were held across the country including Dhaka. Although a large number of women could not participate in these processions, they sprinkled flowers on the procession from the roof of their houses to show solidarity and inspiration. Many women wrote posters all night, made badges with black *sarees*. New techniques have been developed to manage the movement. On the afternoon of February 22, Anowara Khatun spoke against student killings and police torture in the East Bengal Legislative Council. She mentioned, "On February 21, 8 girls including Sufia Ibrahim (Ahmed), daughter of Dhaka High Court Justice Ibrahim and Rawshan Ara (Bachchu) were seriously injured" (Proceedings of the East Bengal legislative assembly, 1952).

Women's participation outside of Dhaka

The Language Movement went beyond the limits of Dhaka metropolis and spread throughout the country. Momotaz Begum, the then head teacher of *Morgan Girl's School* in

Narayanganj, was imprisoned for energizing the people of Narayanganj in a united movement by swearing the blood of martyrs. Police tortured her in jail. Moreover, under the pressure of the government, Momotaz Begum was divorced by her husband (The Daily Prothom Alo, 2020). Noteworthy that some of the students such as Ila Bakshi, Benu Dhar and Shibani were imprisoned along with Momotaz Begum. Furthermore, three women in Narail district, Sufia Khatun, Rizia Khatun and Ruby started movement in locally as well (The Daily Prothom Alo, 2020). Saleha Begum (student of class-X at *Mymensingh Muslim Girl's School*) of Kulaura in Sylhet was expelled, School girl of Khulna Hamida Khatun was humiliated for the uniting women. In addition, Jobeda Khatun, Shahera Banu, Syeda Lutfunnesa Khatun, Syeda Najibunnesa Khatun, Rabeya Ali, Rabeya Khatun, Pratibha Mutsuddi, Taleya Rahman in Chattogram did Language movement as well. Rawshan Ara Bachchu (Interview, March 13, 2018).

Struggle following the 1952

After 1952, the women of East Bengal began to freely and spontaneously participate in various national struggles. The decision to celebrate 21 February 1953 as “Martyr’s Day” was taken by the *Sarbadolio Sangram Parisad* (Dil & Dil, 2011). Students participated in *Prabhat Feri* (early morning procession) with festoons in the morning on 21 February. Farida Bari Malik, Jahrat Ara, Khaleda Fancy Khan were participated here. On this day, the students of different educational institutions of East Bengal took the initiative to build martyr monument. Note that when the students of *Eden Mohila College* and *Dhaka College* tried to build a language martyr monument, they failed due to the Principal’s obstruction (Islam, 1982). Consequently Halima Khatun delivered a speech at a meeting of the *National*

Language Struggle Council in the afternoon. On the other hand, in 1954, Shamsun Nahar Mahmud, Mahmuda Khatun Siddika, Sara Taifur, Hosne Ara Modabber, Bilkis Banu, Shahzadi Begum, Khodeja Khatun, Anwara Bahar Chowdhury, Selina Bahar Chowdhury and so on convened a discussion meeting (Hossain, 2006).

On the morning of February 21, 1955, the students of various educational institutions came to Dhaka University premises wearing black badges and chanted slogans in thousands of voices, “We want Bangla as the national language”, “Martyr memory is immortal”, “We want the release of royal prisoners” and “Stop police brutality” (Kabir, 2014). The police torture started again hence 11 students including Jahrat Ara, Pratibha Mutsuddi, Kamrun Nahar Laili, Farida Bari Malik, Hosne Ara, Anwara Begum, Laila Noor, Talea Rahman were arrested (Helal, 2003). It can be seen that except Rawshan Ara Renu the remaining ten girls got released from jail by signing the bond under the pressure of their parents and the government. Rawshan Ara firmly uttered, “I will not sign the bond, I will leave the day the government releases me”. Rawshan Ara Bachchu (Interview, March 13, 2018). This statement shows the courage and determination of a woman’s self-esteem.

After a long struggle, Bangla was given constitutional recognition as the state language of Pakistan along with Urdu in Article 214 of the first constitution in 1956 (Helal, 2003). The Language Movement started with the demand to make Bangla the state language, but gradually turned into the demand for Bengali rights, independence and autonomy. Thus, from 1952 to 1971 the Language Movement has inspired every turn of the Liberation War of Bangladesh. On November 26, 1999,

UNESCO recognized February 21 as *International Mother Language Day* (Hossain, 2016). In this way, the importance of Language Movement has been recognized as well as the status of Bangladesh has increased in the globe.

Importance

The history of self-sacrifice of the women of East Bengal after the success of the Language Movement is very glorious. In this agitation, the role of women was wide ranging from housewives to educational institutions to public assemblies. In each case the woman was active in her role. However, history has not established women in real dignity and from the place of equality between men and women. The contribution of women has not been properly evaluated in the main stream of history. Although some writings acknowledge the contribution of women in the Language Movement to a limited extent, its detailed analysis is not available. An attempt at a patriarchal perspective is also visible here in the writing of history. Rawshan Ara Bachchu complained that the written history of the Language Movement is distorted and biased. There the contribution of women is not properly appreciated. Conversely, the contribution of women agitating in the remote areas of the country has not fully come up. Historians only speak for the male participants. But the movement took place as a result of the sacrifices of both men and women.

Here mentionable that no woman was made a direct member of the *Rashtrabhasa Sangram Parishad*. Moreover, the students of Dhaka University were given to girl students the responsibility of collecting money to conduct the movement. They fulfill this duty properly. Since the women at that time were not doing

job, many of them took off their favorite jewelry and some donate their small savings. Further, Syeda Khatun (mother of late National Professor of Bangladesh Dr. Anisuzzaman) left her gold chain on the altar of *Shaheed Minar* (language martyr monument), which was first built in the premises of *Dhaka Medical College*. It is a symbol of respect for the martyrs of the Language Movement and the financial support to continue the movement until the status of the mother tongue is achieved. As follows, housewives worked behind the scenes to accelerate the movement with money, crossing the barrier of conservative family wearing *burqa* and participated in the processions. School and college girls also raised slogans in their respective institutions. They shouted slogans like “We want Bangla as the national language”, “Bengali should not be exploited”, “We want the freedom of royal prisoners” and so on. Mainly inspired by cultural values and motivation to get rid of the crisis of existence, women ignored thousands of obstacles and they spontaneously participated in the Language Movement.

In the memoirs of Sufia Ahmed and Rawshan Ara Bachchu, they were not backward in any way even though they were women. Being women the police did not treat them with any courtesy. They have confessed to police assaults in the same way as men agitator. Nevertheless, the success of the Language Movement greatly increased the self-confidence of women. As a result, women bravely participated in various national struggles that took place later.

Conclusion

To conclude, it can be said that Bengali nationalist consciousness erupted by the Language Movement. Success comes only through

the spontaneous participation of people from all levels of the country in this agitation. Sufia Ahmed, Rawshan Ara Bachchu as well as many other women participated in the movement as a whole, regardless of the conservative society's blood eyes. Their role in the Language Movement is manifold. They participated in strikes, meetings, visited various educational institutions, motivated students to participate, wrote posters, make black badges, collected fund for movement needs. As women, they never considered themselves weak. Ignoring social fears and giving up the illusion of their own life. They remained steadfast in making the movement successful amid police baton charge, teargas and bullets. In fact, these women are national heroes. Nonetheless, the Language Movement took Bengali women's awakening and women's emancipation movement far ahead. At present, the story of women's successful participation in the Language Movement is being spread in various ways. A number of women are being given *Ekushey Padak* every year by the government of Bangladesh. Road number 12 at Dhanmondi, Dhaka has been named after Sufia Ahmed. The *International Mother Language Institute* has been established, the field of research here has to be expanded. Then again, true history can only be written if the position of women is determined from a place of gender equality. The appreciation of women in the patriarchal society has so far been very limited, which is more important to expand. The real history of the Language Movement should be thoroughly presented to the new generation, only then they will be guided in the right direction and new horizons will be opened in the days to come.

Notes

1. Language soldier Dr. Sufia Ahmed was born on November 20, 1932. Daughter of Muhammad Ibrahim (Justice,

former Vice-Chancellor of Dhaka University and former Law Minister of the Central Government of Pakistan) and Lutfunnesa Ibrahim. Sufia Ahmed obtained B.A (Hons.) in 1953 and M.A in 1954 from the Department of Islamic History and Culture, *University of Dhaka*. She awarded her Ph.D from the University of London in 1960. She has taught in the department of Islamic History and Culture of the University of Dhaka. Sufia Ahmed was the first woman national professor of Bangladesh. This woman who received *Ekushey Padak* passed away on April 9, 2020.

2. Language soldier Rawshan Ara Bachchu was born on December 17, 1932 in Uchlapara village of Kulaura upazila of Moulvibazar district in Bangladesh. Her father's name is AM Aref Ali and mother is Manirunnesha Khatun. Rawshan Ara Bachchu obtained BA (Hons.), MA degree from the Department of Philosophy, Dhaka University and B.Ed degree from Teachers Training College. She was associated with teaching as well as emphasized on the importance of education for the advancement of the women in Bangladesh. Note that she departed on December 3, 2019.

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