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## DU girl students took to streets for cause of mother tongue

Throwing their traditional "in-door" roles to the wind and breaking out of social stereotypes, girl students took to the streets of Dhaka and other major towns of the country for the cause of their mother tongue, reports BSS.

Only one thing had brought them out to stand beside hundred of male students service-holders and factory workers in the streets-love for their mother language, the target of Pakistan's anti-Bengalee hate campaign.

Like hundreds of male, a large number of women had spontaneously participated in the country's language movement since 1948 when Bangla came under threat following the declaration of Urdu as the state language of Pakistan.

Founder of Pakistan Moham-mad Ali Jinnah had declared at a convocation of Dhaka University at Curzon Hall on March 24, 1948 that Urdu would be the only state language of Pakistan. This declaration immediately drew sharp protests of the students.

Defying all kinds of repression of the Pakistani regime, the women of the country, including the female students of Dhaka University, Dhaka Medical College and Eden Girls College directly or indirectly joined the movement against the conspiracy of Pakistani rulers.

Those who could not join the anti-government processions and rallies, raised funds, visiting house to house to help the movement. "We collected fund for from door to door to continue the movement. We got warm response where ever we went for raising funds," said National Professor Sufia Ahmed while talking to BSS recently.

Professor Sufia Ahmed actively

participated in the anti-government processions during the turbulent days of 1952. She also joined the historic procession on February 21, 1952 breaking section 144 on the Dhaka University campus.

The Pakistani rulers had imposed section 144 on the Dhaka University campus on that day in a bid to stop the student processions march towards the then Provincial Assembly House. Rafiq Jabbar, Salam and Barkat were killed and scores of others injured when police opened fire on a procession near Dhaka Medical College.

Recalling the memories of the violent days of the language movement of 1952, Prof. Sufia Ahmed said the female students of Dhaka University were in the frontline at the University gate followed by male students and members of "Sarbadalio Rastro Bhasha Karmo Parishad" (All Party State Language Working Council).

The Parishad was formed in 1948 to give the language movement an organisational shape and continue the movement under the banner of the organisation.

The female processionists, including Begum Laila Samad, Shamsunnahar, Shafia Khatun, Sarah Talpur, Rousahn Ara Bachchu and myself were injured in the police baton charge and tear gas shelling, she recalled.

"We, the female students as well as other women, had spontaneously participated in the language movement defying all social and family barriers because we felt that we should resist the ill designs of Pakistani rulers against our mother tongue Bangla," she said.

She said it is a rare example in the world history that a nation can shed blood for its mother tongue.

Mrs. Ahmed was overjoyed when the UNESCO declared February 21 as the International Mother Language Day to show respect to those who had sacrificed their lives for the sake of Bangla.

"It's a great achievement of the Bengalee nation that UNESCO has recognised the sacrifices of the sons of the country," she said.

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29