Ideological Orientation of Pakistan People’s Party: Evolution, Illusion and Reality

Abstract

Political party is a cluster of populace, organized to obtain and implement political power. Parties develop a political programme that defines their ideology and sets out the agenda they would follow, to win elective office or get power through constitutional means. Different countries have single party, two parties or multi party systems. The single party system is established in the states where true political argument is not allowed. The two parties and multi-party system presents way of resolving political difference among plural culture and hence are analytical of democratic system. As Pakistan is a plural society thus multi-party system where parties have different political trends, beliefs and programmes is suitable. In the 1970 General Elections, Pakistan had seen for the first time mobilization and inter-play of diversified ideologies. Along with other ideologies ‘Socialism’, was the base of Pakistan People’s Party which generated very serious debate in the country during the elections. Afterwards ‘Socialism’ is no more an idea like a far cry, it became a household ideology and evolved because of peculiar religio-social fabric of Pakistani society into ‘Islamic Socialism’, Musawat-i-Muhammadi’, and ‘Bhuttoism’.

Pakistan People’s Party was founded by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto on December 1, 1967 at Lahore. Bhutto was accompanied by stalwart ideologues like Mubashir Hasan, J.A. Rahim, Mairaj Mohammad Khan, Mumtaz Bhutto, Rafi Raza, Mustafa Khar, and Hayat Sherpao, at the historic place of Mubashir Hasan’s residence. The motto took up for the party was: “Islam is our faith; Democracy is our polity; Socialism is our economy; All power to the people.” To address common mindset an explanatory popular slogan added to the ideological basis, i.e. Roti, Kapra aur Makan (Bread, Clothing, and Shelter).

The Party ideology had become a continuous cause of sizzling discussion before pre and post 1970 election scenario. PPP leadership was shrewd enough to read the pulse of the populace in the country and accordingly brought amalgamated version of Socialism with the majority belief, i.e. Islam. The exhibition of that norm could be seen in the evolution of the basic catch-word, Socialism through the voyage of Islamic Socialism transformed into pure popular Islamic idea, ‘Musawat-e-Muhammadi’. However, as South Asian Society has tendency of hero-worship, therefore, simplified version of PPP ideology is now known as ‘Bhuttoism’. In this paper an effort is made to analyze the ideological evolutionary process of PPP along with the assessment in the context of ideological illusion and reality.
Political party is an organized group of people, having a clear vision in the form of its manifesto to acquire and exercise political power. The origin of political parties dates back to the Nineteenth century in Europe and United States of America. The big parties have representation of whole electorate; whereas cadre parties attract only active elite. However, many parties are composed having features of both the types. The political parties develop a manifesto that defines their political philosophy and sets out the agenda to be pursued, to attract masses and draw strategy to get into power corridors through constitutional process. Different countries adopt single party, two parties or multi-party systems. The single party system is suitable for countries which do not tolerate real political debate. The two party and multi-party systems offer way of resolving political problem within multi-cultural societies and hence expose real democracy. In the 1970 General Elections, Pakistan had seen for the first time mobilization and inter-play of diversified ideologies. Along with other ideologies ‘Socialism’, was the base of Pakistan People’s Party which generated very serious debate in the country during the elections. Afterwards ‘Socialism’ is no more an idea like a far cry, it became a household ideology and evolved because of peculiar religio-social fabric of Pakistani society into ‘Islamic Socialism’, Musawat-i-Muhammadi’, and ‘Bhuttoism’.

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Though Bhutto, the founder of Pakistan People’s Party, had been staunch supporter of Ayub Khan Regime from very beginning of his political upbringing in 1958 to 1966, yet, he dissociated himself from the regime on the issue of Tashkent Declaration in June 1966. At the time he was uncertain about his future course of action. He was analyzing different options available for him and at the same time was not very sure about the political future. Three options were
evidently available to Bhutto; to be amalgamated into a faction of Pakistan Muslim League, to join hands with a progressive National Awami Party or the most challenging one was to establish new political party of his own having clarity of thought with unique stand-point on national and international concerns. 4 Because of taking hard stance on the issue of Tashkent Declaration by Bhutto, Ayub government launched a comprehensive strategy to malign his image. “He was personally harassed and his public meetings were often disrupted. Bhutto eventually decided to form a new party and indicated that it would be radical, reformist, democratic, socialist and egalitarian party.” 5 Bhutto, being a charismatic leader and party head launched an aggressive mass-contact strategy by approaching every nook and corner of the country to reach the masses with his political philosophy, which addressed more specifically focusing on the troubles of the common man and pledged that his party had the solutions of the problems. On the other hand he adopted a very aggressive criticism strategy against the then ruling regime of Ayub Khan.

The timing and focus of Bhutto on anti-establishment stance approached the minds and hearts of the masses within no time because of the ills prevalent in the urban middle classes, students, university and college faculty, labour, Ulema and government employees with low-income who were suppressed for long under the regime. It almost became a volcano and Bhutto hit the nail at ripe time. The political scene with fierce agitation against the government with strikes, demonstrations, and protests every now and then occurred. The movement had spread throughout Pakistan by 1969. The government got panic and started tyrannical crush policy to coup with political gatherings and anti-government movement which seldom resulted in causalities. By the compulsion of unbearable political pressure, Ayub stepped down and on March 25, 1969, handed over the authority to General Yahya Khan, Commander-in-Chief of the army. Yahya decided to announce general elections just after assuming the charge as President. The prominent contenders were; Awami League (AL), Pakistan People’s Party (PPP), National Awami Party Bhashani (NAP-Bhashani), National Awami Party Wali Khan (NAP-Wali Khan), three factions of Pakistan Muslim League, Jamat-i-Islami,(JI) Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam Thanwi (JUI Thanwi), Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam Hazarvi(JUI Hazarvi) and Jamiat Ulema-i-Pakistan (JUP).

The PPP invented new political fashion during the election campaign by attracting the people at large through posters, banners and party flags. The articulation of the leadership was evident through the plan of organizing the processions and public meetings extensively. The canvassing catch word was ‘Socialism’ based slogan of *roti, kapra aur makan*. The party intellectuals 6 have contributed a lot by writing articles in newspapers and magazines for the propagation of party ideology. In this regard, the party organs ‘Nusrat’ and ‘Musawat’ had a significant contribution in disseminating PPP’s political philosophy. Moreover, the focus of the campaign was to address every cadre of society.

On the other hand, rightist parties were having contradiction with the ideology of Socialism. Therefore, they propagated against the point of view of PPP. The religio-political parties went ahead in that campaign against PPP and declared ‘Socialism’ un-Islamic. 7 Due to that allegation and counter-allegation was started
by PPP and religio-political parties against each other. As a result, it had become reason for the gradual shift in PPP’s ideology i.e. from ‘Socialism’ to ‘Musawat-e-Muhammadi’; However, before going into the details of shift it would be interesting to define both the terms.

- **Musawat-e-Muhammadi**

  *Musawat-e-Muhammadi* is derived from Holy Quran; “O mankind! We have created you from a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know one another. Verily, the most honorable of you with Allah is that (believer) who has *Taqwa* (God-consciousness, fearing Allah). Verily, Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware.”

  It reflects that in the verse of Quran the equality before Allah Almighty is emphasized. The study of *Seerah* explains that the Prophet’s (S.A.W) whole life is evidence of practical observance of equality, e.g. at the time of the construction of *Masjid-i-Nabvi*, he himself participated in the digging to lay down the foundations, same was the example at Battle of trench. More importantly, when the Prophet (S.A.W) was presenting the gist of his thought and values in his last appearance at the eve of his last Hajj that all human were equal and indeed there was no preference to white on black nor Arab upon non-Arab. He further explained that if defaced-nose black whose even head was not in good shape would become their ruler and rules in the light of Quran and *Sunnah*, the believers had to follow him in letter and spirit. In the light of above mentioned primary sources of Islam it can be understood that ‘*Musawat-i-Muhammadi*’ is, in fact, ‘social equality’.

- **Socialism**

  The ‘Socialism’ is a modern concept about socio-political system where for the sake of equality all institutions of the country are in the hands government. Therefore, it develops and distributes facilities and responsibilities among the people of the particular society. In fact, no one in the society can feel to be left behind the others or alienated. The concept is drastically in contrast to another European popular concept of capitalism in which sanctity to own a land or business is the basic crux of the idea. “…the core meaning of Socialism is that it is a politico-economic system where the system controls, either through planning or more directly, and may legally own, the basic means of production.”

  Mostly, the term ‘socialism’ is described to explain a specific economic system. The system is based on holding of public utilities as well as natural resources by the state. Whereas, in lieu of that all responsibility of basic needs for that purpose economic plan and strategy with proper direction would also be the duty of state.

  **Pakistan People’s Party’s Stand for Musawat-i-Muhammadi**

  Foundation Meeting Documents as well as 1970 Election Manifesto of PPP are lacking any mention of the term *Musawat-e-Muhammadi*. However, the both reflect demanding mention of ‘socialism’. The Foundation Documents elaborates minutely the necessity of concept;
The aim of the party is the transformation of Pakistan into a socialist society… only socialism creates equal opportunities for all, protects from exploitation, removes the barriers of class distinctions and privileges–can establish economic and social justice. Socialism is the highest expression of democracy and its logical fulfillment…Socialism is, therefore, of direct interest to Pakistan, which is an underdeveloped country marked by internal and external capitalist exploitation.  

Bhutto was consistent since the emergence of party in explaining Socialism being the sole remedy to resolve socio-economic odds of the country. The oral and written viewpoint of Bhutto is elaborating vigorously the ‘Fabian Socialist’ tendency. For example while addressing the Muzaffaragarh Bar Association on January 17, 1968, he said that “no basic anomaly can be tackled without application of the principle of scientific socialism… Change this system and put an end to exploitation.” In the same pattern he advocated his political philosophy in a piece of writing appeared in a pamphlet;  

Socialism is the highest expression of democracy and its logical fulfillment….The universality of the precepts of socialism is essentially due to two reasons: first, the basis of modern socialism is objective; second, socialist thinking is relevant to all countries in every part of the world in their actual economic and political condition. Socialism is, therefore, of direct interest to Pakistan, and underdeveloped country marked by internal and external exploitation….The region of the earth with the highest concentration of poverty is Pakistan. This stigma has to be wiped out by socialism. The immediate task would be to end predatory capitalism and put socialism into motion…. ‘Socialism is our Economy’ because without socialism we shall not be able to attain genuine equality and unity.  

The consistency of Bhutto’s vision regarding social equality was reiterated in his address to the Sindh Convention at Hyderabad in September 1968; “No power on earth can stop socialism—the symbol of justice, equality and the supremacy of man—from being introduced in Pakistan…..It is the demand of time and history…I am a socialist.” In that backdrop elections announced on January 1, 1970 and twenty four political parties emerged on the scene, it included the parties represented religious leanings, i.e. groups representing different sects of Islam as well as regional ethnic groups. The difference between right wing and left wing parties was over-emphasis or total exclusion of religion in the party programmes.  

The election manifesto of the PPP was a comprehensive effort to attract each and every tier of society by providing an essential way out of Pakistan’s socio-economic and political ills. Even the slogans of the party reflected the same theme, i.e. “Islam is our faith”, “Democracy is our polity”, “Socialism is our Economy” and “All power to people”. The slogan of roti, kapra aur makan was a catch-word for masses. The party manifesto was mainly, a critique of the then existing system, ideas and general status quo. While the sole remedy to all crises suggested was adoption of socialism. In the document it was affirmed; “The ultimate objective of the party’s policy is the attainment of a classless society, which is possible only through socialism in our times. This means true equality of the citizens, fraternity under the rule of democracy in an order based on economic and social justice.”
In a religious-based society like Pakistan, spreading of such a philosophy was a herculean task. The general perception was its linkages to the atheist and materialistic approaches. The crude socialism of PPP attracted the wrath of religio-political parties, Jamat-i-Islami in particular, which was on forefront in criticism and discarding the concept of Socialism. The accusations on Bhutto by religious right were very strong, i.e. ‘secular socialist’, ‘atheist’ and even ‘champion of an anti-Islamic ideology’. Mian Tufail Muhammad the Naib Amir of JI commented that “socialist ideology will lead to the disintegration of Pakistan…We will launch a movement against anti-Islamic system”

Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam (Thanvi Group) and Jamiat Ulema-i-Pakistan also joined the bandwagon. Whereas, Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam (Hazarvi Group) was in favour of socialism and justified it by declaring as mere economic formula to get rid of capitalist dominance. Furthermore, different groups of Pakistan Muslim League were also confronted socialism against the very basis of the country.

Bhutto responded;

If we don’t pay attention to economic exploitation and to change the present corrupt system then it will not be possible to check Communism in this country. The only way to check communism is Islamic Socialism. It is necessary to implement this system of equality for the safety of ideology of Pakistan and service of Islam. Equality and Democracy have been stressed the most in Islam. If you do not object word “Democracy” for “Jamhooriyat” then why there is objection on word “Socialism” for “Equality”.  

Consequent upon the prevailing circumstances PPP initiated a campaign to defend its philosophy. Therefore, the ideologues of the party, i.e. Kausar Niazi, Hanif Ramay and Bhutto, adopted ideological transition strategy; socialism to ‘Islamic socialism’ and then Musawat-i-Muhammadi to submerge the allegations branded by the right wing parties. The PPP advocated that Islam and socialism were compatible and similar. While justifying the stance of the party Bhutto declared “the first seeds of socialism were sown in the days of our Prophet (SAW)...That is the Islam which gave birth to the principles and concepts of socialism. That is our Islam, the Islam of the people of Pakistan”. He opined that in the socio-economic perspective Islam and socialism were not having any clash. Bhutto, while defending “Islamic Socialism”, declared that the fore-fathers of the country Allama Muhammad Iqbal and Quaid-i-Azam were of the same view in the context of socio-economic challenges. He contested the stance of religious politicians blaming them of in conflict with the views of founding-fathers.

Bhutto’s slogan of ‘Islamic socialism’ initially attracted the masses. The bewildered educated class congregated around him. The tillers and tenants along with jobless urban masses rallied surrounding him to get rid of the tyranny of capitalism. However it generated a controversial debate subject in the press and subsequently bundle of columns in its support and against appeared. PPP’s point of view in support of ‘Islamic Socialism’ was so dynamic that the religious parties decided to issue a Fatwa against it in order to keep the masses away from the PPP. One hundred and thirteen Ulema signed the Fatwa which appeared in the press on February 26, 1970, declaring socialism as the utmost threat to the security
and ideology of Pakistan. They claimed that “Islamic Socialism” was an imprecise explanation of Islam.

Respond to the challenge PPP anticipated its commitment to Islam. Moreover it persuaded a number of Ulema and Pirz to give cling to counter the charges that ‘Islamic Socialism’ was anti-Islamic. The strategy of the party to Islamise the concept and term of socialism was successful in getting the support of the majority in West Pakistan through the slogan of ‘Islamic Socialism’ and further modifying it into Musawat and Musawat-i-Muhammadi. Hanif Ramay while explaining Musawat-i-Muhammadi affirmed that if democracy was the alternate of ‘Shora’ then socialism should also be measured compatible with Musawat in principle and it was in fact Musawat of Prophet (SAW) from whom these leaders had been frightened.

PPP also employed religious descriptions and metaphors by designating the Sword as party’s election symbol and presenting it as Zulfiqar-i-Ali. The posters were published with Bhutto’s photo riding on horse with sword in his hand and the couplet of Allama Muhammad Iqbal. The basic purpose of depicting himself as sword of Hazrat Ali (R.A) was that he would be having jihad against the social evils in the country as well as the sacred war against India and would be successful.

The results of elections were eye-openers for everyone, particularly, for the right-wing parties. The narrative of religious politicians, i.e. ‘Islam in danger’ flopped and Bhutto’s Islamic Socialism or more precisely, Musawat-i-Muhammadi got through the hearts of voters in the West Pakistan. The most organized party which had challenged PPP manifesto was Jamaat-i-Islami, could only bagged four seats though their election campaign was vigorous. More astonishingly, the whole lot of religio-political parties could only succeed to get eighteen seats. While PPP managed to get as huge as eighty one seats in contrary to them particularly from the Punjab and Sindh. The PPP adopted multi-dimensional approach to get support of the masses in various parts of the West Pakistan. For instance the Bhutto philosophy could only bore fruits in the Punjab, in Sindh it had to get support of the feudal. Interestingly, the urban voters of Karachi were also not unanimous to support PPP because of their leaning towards religio-political parties.

The result statistics revealed that right vote was more than the progressive vote but unfortunately, it was divided and thus benefitted PPP. Moreover, the Bhutto charisma along with programme and slogans opted in the context of common man aspirations. The PPP had read the pulse and temperament of the voter, in general and accordingly improved it ideological stance; from the crude term of socialism to gradual transformation to attractive term of Musawat-i-Muhammadi which proved successful.

The political philosophy of PPP and charismatic personality of Bhutto became constant source of aspiration in the political scene of Pakistan. Moreover, after the death of Bhutto it had emerged as Bhuttoism and had become legend in the politics of Pakistan. Mohtrama Benazir Bhutto had strengthened this phenomenon and even considerable support for PPP still exists among the masses because of its ideological stance.
Conclusion:

The stance of PPP was that the ideological ground of the party, i.e. ‘Musawat-i-Muhammad’ was based upon real teachings of Quran and Sunnah because both the basic sources of Islam stress on social equality and care for down trodden. But there was neither plan nor strategy to garb the laws and politics with the Islamic costumes. Moreover, the brand name of PPP’s ideology, i.e. Islamic Socialism was continuously targeted by the right scholars for being unclear and confused, as Maulana Maududi reflected;

They found out that their socialism cannot dance naked….After realizing this they started calling socialism ‘Islamic…If it is really based on the Qur’an and the Sunnah then what is the need for calling it socialism?… Now when they can see that this does not work they have started it calling Islamic equality [Musawat] and ‘Muhammad Musawat’. The object is the same pure socialism.26

Furthermore, the basic PPP slogans ‘Islam is our Faith’, ‘Socialism is our Economy’, ‘Democracy is our Polity’ and ‘All Power to People’ in built reflected contradictory tendency because in Islamic teachings the ultimate power is with Allah Almighty and not with the people. Interestingly, such stand is also against the constitution of Pakistan in the light of Objective Resolution which initially was Preamble to the Constitution and later on had become direct part of the Constitution.27

The basic dichotomy of the PPP ideologues was that instead moulding themselves in the light of Quran, they tried to drag Quranic injunctions regarding equality in society in to economic parity. The same treatment was adopted with Hadith literature in the context of Musawat-i-Muhammad. Because of socio-religious fabric of Pakistan and the aggressive stance of religious right in general and JI and JUP in particular, ideologically pushed PPP literally to the wall. As in the whole document of 1973 Constitution, Bhutto and his team could not able to mention the term socialism for a single time while continuously the word Islam is used. The ideological debate generated by PPP though brought PPP from pure form of Socialism to initially Islamic Socialism and ultimately Musawat-i-Muhammad eased PPP in the elections but instigated the contradiction within the ranks of the party and resultantly, many stalwarts, including J. A. Rahim, Mubasher Hasan, Mairaj Mohammad Khan parted their ways from PPP in early years after rise to power.

In the theoretical sense, PPP could not be declared as a socialist party from any aspect.28 It reflects the sensibility of PPP leadership that they smelled the terrible reaction of religiously tamed masses if the leftist thought in the shape of Socialism would be thrown in to arena in crude form. Thus, the patch of ‘Islamic’ was attached and ultimately, swallowed even the term Socialism and was replaced by the pure connotation of Musawat-i-Muhammad.

The practical dimension of socialist stance of the party can be analyzed through the prism of elections wear tear. As PPP adjusted with landlords of other parties whereas it ignored the leaders having leaning towards Socialism. However, it was evident that no seat adjustment had been taken place with lower class known leftist candidates other than party. In this regard, the worth-
mentioning examples are; Babu Ferozuddin Ansari, the leader of weavers, was not awarded party ticket for Multan constituency and Bhutto himself jumped in to the context though having more comfortable seats. The same happened in Lahore where a labour leader of Railway Mirza Ibrahim was harshly contested and defeated by Mubashir Hassan. Moreover, on same situation at Karachi Kaneez Fatima was not contested by PPP candidate. It reflected the party policy was not principle based rather conveyance based. Further deep analysis reflect that though PPP did not contest Kaneez Fatima but practically supported Mufti Muhammad Shafi to defeat ultra-right JI candidate. The popular leftist poet Habib Jalib who was contesting elections of the NAP ticket was not only contested by PPP but also defeated. The same strategy adopted by PPP in NWFP (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) sidelined the left wing NAP and brought JUI and Muslim League candidates as winners. Hence, it can be concluded that the Socialism stance of PPP was mere exploitation of the theory at one side and the masses on the other.

Notes

3 The famous agreement signed between India and Pakistan after the 1965 War under the auspices of USSR.
5 Ibid, p.159.
6 The important were, J. A Rahim, Mubashar Hasan, Bhutto, Hanif Ramay Mairaj Muhammad Khan and Kausar Niazi.
7 JUI (Hazarvi Group), however, remained favourable for PPP as it was considering ‘socialism’ just an economic formula.
9 A term in Islamic literature, its literal meaning is a personality with characteristics but when even used independently it refers to the study of life of Prophet (S.A.W).
10 Battle of Ahzab, where different groups of the enemies of Islam gathered to crush Muslims in Madina, because of the advice of Hazrat Salman Farsi (R.A), the Prophet (S.A.W) decided to dig out a trench for the defense of Madina.
15 Ibid., pp.94-95.
16 Ibid., p.32.
17 Pakistan People’s Party, Election Manifesto, p.13.
20 Bhutto, Awakening the People, p.53.
21 Religious decree issued by a religious scholars.
24 The sword of fourth caliph of Islam was called Zulfiqar.
25 Allama Iqbal is the national poet of Pakistan. The lines referred to are as; Shah Mardan Sher-e-Yazdan Qawat-i-Pawardigar-La Fta illa – Ali, La Saif illa Zulfiqar
27 In the process of constitution making as early as 1949, on the firm stand and clear wisdom of the religious leadership, a principle document was adopted by the Constituent Assembly, is called Objective Resolution 1949. It decided once for all, the basic structure and appearance of the State of Pakistan as an ideological Islamic State.
28 In political theory paradigm, Socialism is a secular term having leaning atheism cannot be attached with any monolithic ideology in general and Islam in particular.