

2002 Elections in Pakistan: A Reappraisal

Kamran Aziz Khan*

Abstract

The 2002 Elections in Pakistan were held under extraordinary circumstances. The terrorist attacks on the Pentagon and the World Trade Centre on 11 September 2001 had changed the world politics and the foreign policies of the countries all over the world. The US government decided to attack Afghanistan to hit the Taliban, accusing them for supporting 9/11 attacks and announced to launch a global war against terrorism. Pakistan was also forced to adopt the US policy as it was the neighbouring country of Afghanistan and was among those few countries that had recognized the Taliban government in Kabul. Pakistan's U-turn on its foreign policy also affected the polls which were held a year following the 9/11 incident. Muttahidda Majlis-i-Amal (MMA), a religio-political alliance formed after the US attack on Afghanistan, got unprecedented success in the polls especially in the two Afghan bordering provinces. The paper will examine the unexpected success of MMA in 2002 Elections which was mainly due to the US war against terrorism, change in Pakistan's foreign policy towards the US and *Pakhtoon* affiliation with the Afghan people. Religious sentiments of the common people, religious seminaries and unity among the religio-political parties also contributed to the success of MMA. The desire of General Pervez Musharraf to wipe the mainstream parties out of the national scene and setting up of a hung parliament in the country also contributed to MMA's success. It will be argued that MMA was a temporary factor which appeared at political scene of Pakistan in the wake of 9/11 and US attack on Afghanistan and got success due to external factors instead of its popularity among the masses.

Pakistan was under the dictatorial rule of General Pervez Musharraf since the military coup d'état lead by him in October 1999 which had dismissed the elected government of Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif. General Pervez Musharraf not only got the validation

* Author is a Ph.D. Scholar at Department of History, University of the Punjab, Lahore – Pakistan.

of his coup by the Supreme Court of Pakistan under the 'law of necessity' but also got some powers to amend the constitution to achieve seven point agenda introduced by him at the time of coup. He was also asked by the superior court to hold general elections within a period of three years. General Musharraf introduced various controversial amendments to the constitution under the umbrella of this decision of the superior court. The regime held general elections in October 2002 to garb the dictatorship with democracy.

The terrorist attacks on the Pentagon and the World Trade Centre on 11 September 2001 also had serious implications upon the political developments in Pakistan. This incident not only affected the world politics but also forced most of the nations to revisit their foreign policies. The pride and confidence of American nation was badly hurt due to these attacks so the US government announced to launch a global war against terrorism and decided to attack Afghanistan to hit the Taliban, accusing them for supporting the 9/11 attacks. Being the neighboring country of Afghanistan, Pakistan was also forced to adopt the US policy against terrorism. Pakistan support was important to the US for two reasons. Firstly, Pakistan was among those few countries that had recognized the Taliban government in Kabul and secondly it shares a long border with Afghanistan and also offers her transit trade through its seaports. General Pervez Musharraf took a U-turn on country's previous policy and sided with US in its war against the Taliban to see them out of power. Pakistan was also inching towards controlled democracy from a complete dictatorship during this period. The general elections were to be held in October 2002. The US policy against terrorism and its unconditional support by General Pervez Musharraf created hearted among the masses especially among the *Pakhtoon* population of NWFP and Balochistan which had close relations with the *Pakhtoon* people of Afghanistan.

The Formation of PADC & MMA

After the US attack on Afghanistan, thirty five political and religious parties and groups formed the Pak-Afghan Defence Council (PADC), to express their solidarity with the Taliban of Afghanistan. Most of them were the *ulema* groups and parties. The three major religio-political parties of PADC, Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam (F), Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam (S) and Jamaat-i-Islami, had close ties with the Taliban of Afghanistan. On the other hand, the chiefs of these three parties were also *Pakhtoon*, from NWFP, and had cross-border affiliations. Especially, both of the factions of JUI had been deeply concerned with Taliban regime and had a great ideological and political

coherence with them. Most of the Taliban were educated in the seminaries (*madrassas*) run by these parties. So, under the influence of these parties, PADC strongly criticized Musharraf's policy of unconditionally supporting the US in its war against Afghanistan. As a reaction, the Musharraf regime alleged some of the major religio-political parties for their involvement in terrorist activities and started a crackdown against them. Maulana Samiul Haq of JUI (S), as the Chairman of PADC, demanded the end of the crack down by the military government against religious parties (The News, 2002). In the mid of January 2002, General Pervez Musharraf banned the six hard-line religious groups of different sects alleging them for their involvement in terrorist activities in and outside the country. These included *Sipah-i-Sahaba Pakistan*, *Tehrik-i-Jaferya Pakistan*, *Lashkar-i-Jhangvi*, *Jaish-i-Muhammad*, *Lashkar-i-Tayaba* and *Tehrik-i-Nifaz-i-Shariat-i-Muhammadi*(The News, 2002). Most of these banned organizations were outfits of the major religio-political parties of the country so these parties strongly condemned the regime for banning the organizations at the platform of PADC. Later on, in May 2002, the same PADC gave birth to Muttahidda Majlis-i-Amal (MMA) as an electoral alliance to contest October 2002 Elections in Pakistan. MMA included six religio-political parties, namely Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam (Fazalur Rehman Group), Jamaat-i-Islami, Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam (Samiul Haq Group), Jamiat Ulema-i-Pakistan, Markazi Jamiat Ahle Hadith Pakistan and Islami Tehrik-i-Pakistan. Maulana Shah Ahmad Noorani of JUP was elected as the first president of MMA. It was proclaimed that the alliance will work for the freedom, solidarity and the establishment of a real Islamic and democratic system in the country. It was emphasized that MMA would work for sectarian harmony and would put a check on the wave of secularism in the country (1st Declaration of MMA, 2001).

The Introduction of Constitutional Package

In January 2002, the military government had introduced constitutional package which increased the number of seats in National Assembly from 237 to 350 including 60 reserved seats for women. The women quota ceased to exist in 1993 which not only was revived but also increased from 10 to 60 (The News, 2002; Dawn, 2002). According to some of the constitutionalists, this increase in the women quota had disturbed the structure of the National Assembly (Interview with S.M. Zafar, 2008). According to the Chief Executive's order, 148 seats were allocated for Punjab, 61 for Sindh, 35 for NWFP, 14 for Balochistan and 14 for FATA & Federal area. The election on the sixty seats reserved for women and twenty five for technocrats was to be held on the basis of proportional

representation system. Ten seats were reserved for non-Muslims on the basis of whole country constituency. The clause 7 of The Conduct of General Elections Order 2002 described that the elections for National and provincial assemblies would be held on joint electorate system, the age of the voter as eighteen years and status of the Qadianies (Ahmadies) to be unchanged under the 1973 Constitution (The Conduct of General Elections Order, 2002). Such a person was disqualified for the membership of national or provincial assemblies who “violates Islamic Injunctions” (The Conduct of General Elections Order, 2002). The military government also made it mandatory for a person to be a university degree holder who wanted to contest the elections for national or provincial assemblies. (The Conduct of General Elections Order, 2002). The politicians protested against the condition and finally challenged it in the Supreme Court of Pakistan in July 2002. The Supreme Court dismissed the petition and gave a verdict that the condition imposed by the government is neither against the constitution nor the principles of democracy (Botteron, 2006). The seats reserved for the women were to be filled up by nomination of the parties securing more than five percent of seats in the national or provincial assemblies. Due to this procedure, only such women reached in the assemblies who were from the families with political background or had close relationship with the party leaders. This elite representation became dependant upon males of their families and could not play a vital role in the assemblies due to their indirect election.

The reintroduction of joint electorate was greatly resisted by the religious parties. The military government introduced the joint electorate system to liberalize the electoral system of the country. The supporters of the joint electorate said that it was the original system which was unanimously introduced in the 1973 Constitution. They considered the introduction of separate electorate as a threat to the unity of the country which has distanced the minorities from the main stream politics of the country. They also considered it a tool used by General Zia-ul Haq to win the favours of religious parties for his so called ‘Islamization program’ (Dawn, 2002). The supporters of separate electorate considered the endeavours of the military regime to push the country towards secularism and a support to the non-Muslim Ahmadia minority in Pakistan. MMA leadership had great reservation upon the introduction of joint electorate by the military regime. They also considered the reserved seats for non-Muslims as a great loss to the Muslims of the country in the presence of joint electorate (Waseem, 2002). The issue of mentioning the religious identity in the registration form of the voters was also a great concern among the *Ulema* and religious circles of the country due to Ahmadia

Community. The Election Commission had issued a form which did not require the mentioning of religion of the voter as there was no such requirement under the joint electorate system. Due to the protest of religious circles, on 17 June 2002, sections 7-B and 7-C were incorporated into the original Conduct of General Elections Order. The Ahmadies decided to boycott the coming elections as a protest due to this decision (Waseem, 2002).

MMA rejected the constitutional package, code of conduct and Political Parties Act presented by the military government. The President of MMA, Maulana Shah Ahmad Noorani, rejected the proposed constitutional package and advised the government not to introduce the constitutional amendments but only to hold fair and free elections in the country. He also asked the government for independent Election Commission for fair and free elections in October 2002 (Dawn, 2002). Maulan Sami-ul Haq declared the constitutional package as NRB-sponsored and “negation of the democracy” (Dawn, 2002). The MMA leadership reproached General Musharraf for amending the unanimous constitution of 1973, following the US dictation at the cost of Islam & the freedom of country, restrictions on seminaries and mosques for the accomplishment of his secular agenda (Dawn, 2002).

Presidential Referendum 2002

In April 2002, General Musharraf unveiled his plan to hold a presidential referendum to get himself elected as President of the country for next five years. All of the major political parties, except PML (Q), were against the Presidential Referendum as it was against the 1973 Constitution. Jamaat-i-Islami, the second largest party of MMA, challenged ‘The conduct of Referendum’ in the Supreme Court of Pakistan. On 27 April 2002, a nine-member bench of the Supreme Court, headed by Chief Justice Sheikh Riaz Ahmad, validated the referendum through its verdict that the Referendum Order was issued under the powers conferred to General Pervez Musharraf by the same court validating the military take over on October 12, on the basis of doctrine of necessity. The Presidential Referendum ‘held’ on 30 April 2002 declared General Pervez Musharraf as ‘elected’ President of the country for next five years with a majority vote of 97.5% in his favour (The Nation, 2002). Some independent observers considered 97.5 % vote in favour of General Musharraf as fraud and result of persuaded voting. The young boys and other people caste multiple votes. Some of them did so just to make a mockery of the exercise (Bakhtiar, 2002). The Presidential Referendum of April 2002 “invoked memories of General Ziaul Haq’s 1984 rigged referendum”

(Talbot, 2003) and was indicative of General Musharraf's political ambitions in the future. MMA, along with mainstream parties, remained on the anti referendum front during the presidential referendum held by General Musharraf (Waseem, 2002). Qazi Hussain Ahmad also declared the referendum as a ridicule of the electoral process (Interview with Qazi Hussain Ahmad, 2008).

The Election Campaign

The Elections for the National and provincial assemblies were to be held in October 2002. During the election campaign, various opposition parties alleged that their workers had been harassed, arrested and their public meetings had been disturbed by the government (Khan, 2002). MMA remained successful in gathering the masses, especially the *Pakhtoon* voters, around it due to its anti-American posture and promised Islamic system in the country (Waseem, 2002). It named the election as a referendum between the US agents and Islamic forces hence requested the people to vote for MMA in order to free the country from the US influence (Waseem, 2002).

In its electoral manifesto, MMA promised to implement the *Sharia* law in the country and to follow the recommendations of Council for Islamic Ideology in this regard. It also promised for Islamic system of justice, freedom of judiciary and press and equal rights for minorities. MMA spoke for the accountability of rulers, elected representatives, judiciary and the army. The alliance also guaranteed food, clothing, residence, medical treatment and education for all citizens of the state. It assured free and compulsory education for all children up to 8th class. It promised the end of taxation system based upon the exploitation of common people. The manifesto also addressed the problems faced by women, farmers, workers and the youth (Manifesto of Muttahida Majlis-i-Amal). MMA also stressed upon the importance of provincial autonomy and distribution of powers at the grass roots level (Dawn, 2002). The then vice-president of MMA, Qazi Hussain Ahmad vowed that if MMA came to power, it will turn presidency, prime minister, governor and chief minister houses into educational and health institutions (Dawn, 2002). It criticized government's Afghan policy and the unconditional support of General Musharraf to the US in its so called war against the terrorism. It also called the people for the Islamic system based on the *Quran* and the *Sunnah* (Dawn, 2002). Maulana Fazalur Rehman rebuffed the perception of setting up a pure Islamic state on the footsteps of Taliban in the wake of MMA's success in the elections (Dawn, 2002). According to Commonwealth Observer Group Reports, among all the

political parties, MMA carried out a theme based campaign. All other parties run their campaign on general economic and welfare issues rather than ideological issues. (Election Observer Group Reports, 2006).

MMA campaign showed a great unity among the leaders of different sectarian groups of the Muslims which increased good feeling of common people for the alliance and hence vote. MMA attracted the new voter especially between the ages of 18-21 and also mobilized the old voters to its benefit who generally didn't want to participate in the electoral process (Waseem, 2002). The *Madrassas* (seminaries) run by the constituent parties of MMA proved to be the election offices and the students of these *madrassas* were the workers of the election campaign of the MMA. These students organized and participated in the rallies and public meetings of the alliance. At the same time the ideological allies of each component party, campaigned for the candidates of MMA during their Friday sermons. The political leadership and the students of *madrassas* joined hands for the success of MMA. Mosques and *Madrassas* contributed a lot in MMA's success, which was not available to its political rivals (Waseem, 2002).

The military regime used heavy arm-twisting through administration and National Accountability Bureau to force the ex-members of the parliament to switch over to the King's Party, PML(Q). The ultimate goal was to form a hang parliament in which all powers may be enjoyed by the president-cum-army chief of Pakistan. The fear of General Musharraf from the leadership of two major political parties, PML(N) and PPP, forced him to prolong their exile through the constitutional amendments. The ultimate purpose of the barring Mian Nawaz Sharif and Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto, from the election, was to hammer their parties in the electoral process (Election Observer Group Reports, 2006). These parties also never tried to dissociate their fortunes from the personalities of their leaders. This phenomenon did a great loss to these parties and indirectly benefited MMA. The political vacuum produced due to the absence of two major leaders made a better space for the prominence of MMA. The candidates of MMA were not much affected by the condition of educational qualification imposed by General Musharraf as they had religious degrees which were considered as equal to graduation since the times of General Ziaul Haq. MMA got another chance to cash the religious sentiments of the people when The Election Commission of Pakistan allotted the symbol of book to MMA which symbolically stands for the *Quran*. So, the opponents accused MMA

for cashing the belief of the people with its symbol for political ends (Waseem, 2002).

Analysis of the Electoral Process & Results

The fairness of 2002 Elections remained controversial among the political circles of the country. The opposition had been criticizing General Musharraf for the pre-election and post-election rigging in favour of PML(Q) and National Alliance (NA). The regime allegedly pressurized the politicians to join PML(Q) and also made transfers of bureaucrats for the benefit of king's party. National Accountability Bureau (NAB) was also used to wangle defections among the main stream political parties like PPP and PML (N) in favour of the PML(Q). The military regime also benefited PML(Q) in media war and continued to project it in the media especially on PTV. Election Commission of Pakistan itself was campaigning for the PML(Q) by showing its symbol in the sample polling advertisement in the national media (Waseem, 2002). According to Commonwealth Observer Group Reports, the Governors, Chief Ministers, Chief Secretaries, and some of the *Nazims* campaigned for the King's party, PML(Q). Especially, the offices of the Governors of Punjab and Sindh provinces were working as "campaign Cells" for the above party (Election Observer Group Reports, 2006).

International media observed that the elections were rigged by the military regime of General Musharraf (Telegraph, 2002) and the regime had remarkably affected the electoral process for the October 2002 Elections (The Christian Science Monitor, 2002). International observers considered the October 2002 elections in Pakistan as generally free and fair although severe blemishes were also observed (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, US Government. Country Reports on Human Rights Practices-2004). According to The European Union's Election Observation Mission to Pakistan, Election Commission of Pakistan failed to assert its independence from the military government of General Musharraf. The mission also observed the misuse of public infrastructure. The parties with sympathies of military government also promised for the future development projects during their election campaign. On the other hand the condition of graduation for the candidature of the national and provincial assemblies deprived more than 96 % of population from contesting the election. The mission also accused the military government for serious blemishes in the elections (European Union Election Observation Mission, Preliminary Statement on Election 2002 of Pakistan). International Crisis Group (ICG) of the United States also alleged the military government for

rigging the elections on national level (Ahmad, <http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=4827&l=1>). The Commonwealth Observers Group concluded that it was satisfied on the conduct of election on the polling day but fairness of the election was suspicious due to the steps taken by the military government (Election Observer Group Reports, 2006) The military government interfered in the electoral arrangements and democratic process which caused serious blemishes during the elections (European Union Election Observation Mission. Preliminary Statement on Election 2002). However, the spokesman of US State department, Richard A. Boucher, simply welcomed the election results of 2002 Elections in Pakistan New York Times, 12 October 2002). Deputy President of MMA, Qazi Hussain Ahmad, declared the election results as a “revolution” (Telegraph, 2002).

MMA fielded 183 candidates for 272 seats of the National Assembly out of which 45 were returned. After computing the women’s and minority seats, the total members of MMA were 59 in the house of 342 (<http://www.ecp.gov.pk/content/GE-2002.htm> 15 December, 2007). Twenty nine candidates of MMA, for National Assembly were declared successful who belonged to NWFP. This province has a total quota of 35 members in the National Assembly. MMA got majority in provincial assemblies of NWFP and Balochistan. In NWFP provincial assembly, it came forward as the single largest party with 48 seats out of 99. It had 68 members in the house of 124 after computing independents and reserved seats for women and minorities. MMA also emerged as the largest party of Balochistan province in these elections with its 13 seats. All the winning candidates of MMA in the provincial assembly belonged to JUI (F). It was not phenomenal in this case as JUI (F) had strongly been representing itself in this assembly since 1970. The collective share of all the constituent parties thus increased the number of its seats. PML(Q) appeared as the second largest party with 11 seats. The third largest group was of independents. According to final party position of Balochistan Assembly, MMA got 18 seats adding the reserved seats and independents that joined MMA, as compared to 21 of PML(Q) in the house of 65 members. The defeat of ethnic parties like Balochistan National Party (BNP) and Jamhoori Wattan Party (JWP) was also an exceptional change. In the Sindh assembly, MMA got 10 seats. In the NWFP assembly JUI (F) won 28 seats and JI got 20 seats (Khan 2002). In Balochistan, JUI (F) got all of the MMA seats. In the Punjab assembly, MMA won eleven seats out of which seven were of Jamaat-i-Islami (Bahadur, 2004). In these elections, JUI (F) and Jamaat-i-Islami emerged as the dominating parties of MMA. These two parties won 50 seats and all other parties won only three

seats in the national assembly. JUI (S) won two seats and JUP won only one seat for the national assembly. Jamiat Ahl-i-Hadith won no seat.

The better electoral success of MMA was contributed by particular factors. First was the anti-America sentiment among the masses especially among the *Pakhtoon* people of NWFP and Balochistan due to US attack on Afghanistan. MMA was severely agitating against these attacks, so people voted for it. The second reason was the opposition of Afghan policy of Musharraf regime which also collected the anti-Musharraf vote for MMA. Third was the decision of General Musharraf to keep away Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif out of political scene which also contributed in showing the good results of MMA. Fourth reason was the mistrust of the common people upon the alleged corrupt leadership of the major political parties. Both, Nawaz Sharif and Benazir Bhutto had been accused for alleged corruption not only locally but also internationally (Ahsan, n.d). It also encouraged the people to take political refuge under the banner of MMA in the hope of a better future. Fifth reason was the electoral system of Pakistan which paved the way for greater number of seats for MMA with a low percentage of votes. The alliance remained successful in forming the government in NWFP with a 13 % of total cast votes. It got 52 seats (19.33%) in National assembly with 11.1 % of votes but PML(N) got only 14 seats (5.14 %) in the same assembly with almost the same percentage of votes i.e. 11.23 %. Sixth cause was the split of votes among different parties, like PPP, PPP (SB), PML(Q) and PML(N), which also benefited MMA (Bahadur, 2004). Seventh contributing factor was the electoral symbol of MMA which boosted up its posture and its Islamic identity (Waseem 2002). Eighth cause was MMA's clear religious agenda due to which it also got that pro-Islamic vote which was received by PML(N) in the 1997 election. Ninth factor was the military government's endeavours to redirect the votes of PML (N) to regime-sponsored PML(Q) and it wanted that rest of the votes be polled for MMA rather than PML(N) (Shah 2003). According to Magnus Marsden, the growing Islamic sentiments were also the cause of MMA's success in *Pakhtoon* dominated provinces of the country (Marsden, 2005). Furthermore, MMA was the only party that was clearly opposing General Musharraf and the US due to its war on terror. MMA's success was also a vote of no confidence by the people of NWFP and Balochistan upon General Musharraf's Afghan and US policies. Another group of analysts had the opinion that MMA showed unexpected results due to the manipulation made by ISI (Markey 2007) and its success was engineered by the military regime to use its stature as a bargaining chip with Washington (Waseem,

2002, & Haqqani 2005). But, General Musharraf turned down the notion that he or the governmental intelligence agencies lent any support to MMA during the electoral process. He was of the opinion that if he had to rig the results, he would have done it for a party other than MMA (Musharraf, 2006) as MMA was an unwelcome phenomenon to the West and especially to US in the context of Taliban factor in Afghanistan.

The 2002 Elections were a hallmark in the growth of religio-political parties of the country although temporary in nature. MMA itself was not expecting so good response from the people of NWFP. In the past, traditional parties like PML (N), PPPP and ANP had been forming the governments in this province. This time, the same was expected but it happened contrary to it (Waseem, 2002). Even General Musharraf could not comprehend the growing support of MMA as before the 2002 Elections, he guaranteed to senior US officials that the Islamist alliance would not be able to get more than five percent vote (Hussain, 2007).

Making of the governments

Pakistan Muslim League (Q) emerged as the largest party in National Assembly of Pakistan with 118 seats. The second largest party was PPPP with 80 seats and third largest was the MMA with 59 seats (<http://www.ecp.gov.pk/content/GE-2002.htm> 15 December 2007). None of the party alone was in a position to form a government. Due to the lexis expressed by top leadership of PPP for MMA, the chances of cooperation between the two parties became impossible which was already much difficult. Qazi Hussain Ahmad refused to accept LFO and NSC but offered to elect General Musharraf as constitutional president, in cooperation with PML-Q, if he had given a date for stepping down as COAS (Dawn 2002). He already had stressed that the policy of cooperation with Washington should be discussed in the parliament and then be formed by it (The Christian Science Monitor, 2002). MMA also negotiated with PML(Q) to form coalition government at the centre but it failed to strike any deal with it (Dawn 2002). The military regime tried its best to finalize a deal with MMA for the formation of central government but negotiations failed due to MMA's demand for the post of premier and a firm date from General Musharraf to step down as COAS. The alliance also demanded the reversal of pro-US policies adopted by the regime (Hussain, 2007). All of the demands were too enormous for General Musharraf to comply with. Maulana Fazalur Rehman had reservations on constitutional amendments personally made by General Musharraf, US bases in Pakistan and presence of FBI

officials in the country (Dawn 2002) but he was ready to lend his support to the military government in exchange of his installation as premier. He was keen to work as Prime Minister even with General Pervez Musharraf so he advocated for the adoption of flexible approach for the formation of government. Due to the pressure of JUI (F), MMA announced not accept any body as prime minister except Maulana Fazlur Rehman (Bahadur, 2004). According to General Pervez Musharraf, a proposed coalition government of PML(Q) and the MMA, at the centre, remained under consideration. Firstly, in the post 9/11 scenario, internationally it would have been a negative expression to share power with MMA. Secondly MMA was demanding the post of Prime Minister for Maulana Fazalur Rehman who was not only unacceptable internationally but also locally. General Musharraf stated that the Maulana personally visited to convince him for the desired post and assured a very reconciliatory approach towards the US and the West. According to General Musharraf, he was also keen to lend a support against Al-Qaeda and all other extremists (Musharraf, 2006).

General Musharraf wanted to see PML(Q) in the power. Due to the continued efforts of intelligence agencies, some independent members of National Assembly and certain from different parties, agreed to co-operate with Zafarullah Jamali, the hand-picked candidate of pro-military PML(Q) for the post of prime minister. On the other hand GHQ also organised the defectors from the main stream party, PPPP to support PML(Q) to form the government at centre. PML(Q) also got the support of MQM, which had 17 National Assembly seats. General Pervez Musharraf decided to keep the anti-defection provisions of the Constitution under suspension to benefit the pro-military party PML(Q) to make the government at the centre.

Conclusion

MMA showed extraordinary performance in 2002 elections due to its anti-US, anti-Musharraf posture and due to the above explained factors. MMA formed its individual government in NWFP. During making of the coalition government with PML(Q) in Balochistan, it compromised on its anti-Musharraf stance and even was ready to join the central government at the price of its election promises, but could not avail the chance due to the failure of negotiations. The political developments during 2007 showed that the unity among the religious parties was temporary in nature. MMA could not take a unanimous stand upon various issues during the Musharraf era due to the pragmatic politics and the alliance dismembered well before the 2008 Elections. The success of MMA in 2002 Elections was

temporal in nature as it was partially due to the unity of religio-political parties and partially due to above mentioned factors of short-term effect. These supporting factors had also vanished with the time period and MMA also had cracks among its ranks due to politics of opportunism. Hence the masses not only showed their mistrust upon the policies of General Musharraf in 2008 Elections but also did not vote for ex-constituent parties of MMA.

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