

# **Politics of Reconciliation and Accommodation: A Study of Benazir Bhutto's First Era of Democratic Government 1988-1990**

**M. Javaid Akhter**

## **Abstract**

This article reflects the trends of political government of Benazir Bhutto from 1988 to 1990 after the restart of democracy in Pakistan. The major challenge of that government was to refurbish the political ethos of the polity. It was the political acumen of leadership of that time which explored every option to adjust the views of public representatives. In this article this political accommodation has been analysed under the concept of consociationalism—opined by Arend Lijphart. This attitudinal and institutional adaptability brought to fore the political behaviour and ultimately projected those signs which could favour to political stability in the plural society of Pakistan.

## **Introduction:**

It is generally believed that democracy is a process in which views of like and unlike are adjusted to make the process viable and healthy which in turn leads to the stability of political system. Pakistan is a country where cultural heterogeneity exists and all the time it creates pressures in the system in terms of demand which challenges the state-society relationship. Political process of Pakistan did not run smoothly in the half of its total life due to untimely intervention of military in the political process on the pretext of failure of representative government in their response to the demands of the people of Pakistan. The other way round political governments exhibited political tolerance when they got the chance to run their affairs in their own way. Political representative governments eulogized those political values in their political agenda and in their practical response which reflected the public aspirations, wishes, demands and needs. This paper is an attempt to explore the nature of systemic interactive mechanism and the role of its active agents in building the reconciliatory attitude for the political stability and development of political system. Furthermore, here the era of Benazir government has also been studied to see the nature of the system and the role of political agents—politicians and political parties—in strengthening democratic set-up. The importance of this period is also come to fore due to the return of democratic set up after eleven years of dictatorial rule of General Zia-ul-Haq who ruled the country from 1979 to 1988.

### **Conceptual Background of the Phenomenon:**

It is a common knowledge that in any in the coalition governments, the authority of decision making is diffused. This is because of the reason that it is shared by all stake holders which are interconnected and interdependent upon each other on the basis of coalition principles. The motivation behind the coalitions is to distribute the spoils of the government among all coalitional partners. This state of affair is similar to that which is found in consociational design of government and having the characteristics of proportionality because it removes a large number of divisive problems from the decision making process. Jurg Steiner defines the proportional model as “all groups influence a decision in proportion to their numerical strength”.<sup>1</sup>

Pakistan’s society is fragmented on different lines of socio-cultural associations and is generally described a plural society which is drawn into political instability due to its heterogeneous nature. It is considered a challenge for the political-democratic government to steer its way through by accommodating the interests of all representative groups. Arend Lijpart(1977), a political scientist denoted accommodation—a consociational way of approaching the issues and problems through power sharing mechanism.<sup>2</sup> This power sharing occurs more smoothly in a homogenous, secular political culture instead of sharply cleavage society. The society of Pakistan is described a blend of traditional and modern values and this kind of society is not sharply divided along the different patterns of associations. There is porous borders among the different associations which are functioning not a hurdle in the building of political affiliations.

Arend Lijpart took the observation of Gabriel Almond with regard to correlation[existed] between the political stability and political culture on one hand and social structure on the other hand with particular reference to identifying the typology of democratic systems.<sup>3</sup> The theoretical basis of Almond’s typology is the “overlapping memberships” with diverse interests and outlooks lead to moderate attitudes. In Pakistan there is parallel existence of subcultures which absorb the shocks of the system and lent the political catharsis to be the part of policy initiatives. There are no sharp and deep cleavages which seemingly appear in political interaction and peoples cross cutting affiliations in turn enhance the stability of the political system. Truman states this proposition as follows which may provide the evidence for Pakistan’s polity ‘in the long run a complex society which may experience

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<sup>1</sup> Jurg Steiner, The Principles of Majority and Proportionality, *British Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 1, No. 1, January, 1971, p.63, pp. 63-70.

<sup>2</sup> See Arend Lijpart, *Democracy in Plural Society: A Comparative Exploration*, New York, Yale University press, 1977.

<sup>3</sup> Arend Lijpart, Consociational Democracy, *World Politics*, vol.21, January 1969, pp. 207-208, pp.207-225.

revolution, degeneration and decay, if it maintains its stability. However, it may do so in large measure because of the fact of multiple memberships'.<sup>4</sup>

With reference to the context, in the underlying sections we will analyze how far political government of Benazir Bhutto coordinated the political entities of that time to carry forward the political agenda and it is to see how the major political forces participated at will in the functioning of political system.

In this context the observation of Robert Dahl positively seems for the reinforcement of democratic values by boarding the stake holders. He points out that "...any active and legitimate group will make itself heard effectively at some stage in the process of decision," which is "no mean thing" in a political system, and that it is a "relatively efficient system for reinforcing agreement, encouraging moderation, and maintaining social peace, which is no negligible contribution" to the art of democratic government"<sup>5</sup>

In Pakistan democratic forces participated actively in the electoral process of 1988 and those who remained apathetic in that process does not mean that they have no interest in the electoral activity. It is reflected in the turn out of 1988 which depicted that people of Pakistan participated in the elections via political parties which articulated the interests of the community and aggregated it by which they have been supported by the people. It has been showed in the results of elections of national and provincial assemblies of 1988. in those elections most of the voters were aligned with the political parties and particularly national parties which recuperated the support of the people by presenting the agenda which was more appealing for the masses. The support of the masses for the parties and their participation in the electoral process is clear in the below given tables of turn out and of party position in this election 1988.

**(i) Turn Out in National Election**

<b>TURN OUT</b>	<b>1988</b>
<b>Balochistan</b>	<b>25.7%</b>
<b>Sindh</b>	<b>39.7%</b>
<b>Punjab</b>	<b>46.49%</b>
<b>NWFP</b>	<b>33.92%</b>
<b>Pakistan</b>	<b>43.07%</b>

Source: General Elections Report, Vol.ii, page, IV.

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<sup>4</sup> David B. Truman, *The Governmental Process: Political Interests and Public Opinion*, New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1958, pp.508,511.

<sup>5</sup> Richard W. Krouse, *Polyarchy and Participation: The Changing Democratic Theory of Robert Dahl*, *Polity*, Vol. 14, No. 3, 1982, pp.445-46, pp. 441-463.

**National Assembly Election Result (1988)**

parties	Punjab	Sindh	NWFP	Balochistan	Total
PPP	52	31	7	1	91
IJI	45	-	7	2	54
PAI	3	-	-	-	3
JUI(F)	-	-	3	4	7
JUI(D)	-	-	1	-	1
ANP	-	-	3	-	3
PNP	-	-	-	1	1
BNA	-	-	-	2	2
PDP	1	-	-	-	1
NPP	1	-	-	-	-
Independents	11	15*	4	1	31
	113(115)	46	25(26)	11	194(199)

Source: Morning News, November 17, 1988.

**Note:**

(1) This number of independents in Sindh is largely due to the non party denomination of the 'Muhajir' community in this election and they have been placed in independents.

(2) Here, in this table, the eight seats of FATA are not included. Therefore total seats are counted as 199, including one seat of federal area

**Provincial Assembly Results (1988):**

Party	Punjab- 240	Sindh- 100	NWFP- 80	Balochistan- 40	Total- 460
IJI	108	1	28	8	145
PPP	94	67	20	3	184
ANP			12		12
JUI(F)	1		2	8	11
BNA				6	6
PNP				2	2
PAI	2				2
PDP	2				2
NPP(K)	1				1
PPI		1			1
WATAN PARTY				1	1
INDEPENDENTS	32	31*	15	6	84
TOTAL	240	100	77	34	451

Source: Morning News, Nov 21, 1988. \*This number of independents in Sindh is largely due to the non party denomination of the 'Mujahir' community in this election.

Here the views of Maurice Duverger and Sigmund Neumann are closely relative for the part of the parties which they play in elections. Both describe that" there is close relationship between the number of parties and the

democratic stability. Duverger believes that two party systems seem to correspond to that nature of things because it accurately reflects the natural duality of public opinion but also tends to be more stable than a multi party system....”<sup>6</sup> Similarly Neumann argues that “multiparty system, unlike the two party system does not have a unifying and centralizing role and thus consequently does not hold great promise of effective policy formation”.<sup>7</sup> In spite of that in modern democratic era parties do their part in interest articulation and transform them into policy initiatives. The results of election 1988 showed that there was number of parties which got their share in elections in terms of vote and seats and each of them presented subcultures, groups and communities with a minimum of interest aggregation and their transmission. It has been evaluated in the underlying sections that how effectively the parties and their leadership worked after elections to accommodate their point of views and legitimate interests. It has also been judged that it is the sensitivity of the political agents that they sensitized the power sharing as a need of the plural society of Pakistan and for which they operationalised their agenda within the available means of state authority.

### **Process of Government Making:**

Indeed 1985 was one of the most important years of the Pakistan’s history when the process of the civilianization of the military regime started. The 1973’s constitution was amended by the introduction of the 8<sup>th</sup> amendment through the elected assembly of that time and provided indemnity to all the acts of the military government from 1977 to 1985. The issues for the new political government to deal with were the remnants of the past because long rule of military not only changed the basic features of the constitution but it also suppressed the liberty of the individual and the press. All the political parties made sure of the implementation of the agenda of liberty, freedom and association of the people of Pakistan at all costs in their manifestos of election 1988.

The 1988’s elections made some of the trends visible at the political scene of Pakistan. Such trends were as: the role of the political parties; effective mobilization of the masses by the agenda of the development; the work of the ideological considerations to get the public response in the political process; more reliance on the political parties especially the national parties and strengthening the bond of federation. The elections of the National and Provincial Assemblies held on the 16<sup>th</sup> and the 19<sup>th</sup> of November 1988 respectively, i.e., one hundred and seventy four days after the dissolution of the assemblies by the late general Zia ul Haq on May 29, 1988. The issue of forming the viable political government stood not unresolved following the

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<sup>6</sup> Arend Lijpart, *op.cit.*, p.12.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p.13.

failure of any single party to win a simple government forming majority at the centre but some of the parties like IJI (Islami Jamhoori Ittehad) and the PPP (Pakistan Peoples Party) were in majority in the Punjab and the Sindh Assemblies respectively.

It was the strength of the parties that after a long period of suppression of military rule they revived themselves due to their ideological and manifesto-appeal. People rewarded them due to their perseverance and steadfastness. The performance of PPP became more praiseworthy when it secured the majority of the seats in the National Assembly (shown in the above given table) without old stalwarts like Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi, Ghulam Mustafa Khar, Abdul Hafeez Pirzada, Maulana Kausar Niazi and Mumtaz Bhutto.<sup>8</sup> It gives the impression that parties revive with their agenda and organizational strength, not with personalities who have no charismatic appeal.

Benazir Bhutto took the charge of the government on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 1988 as the tenth Prime Minister of Pakistan and Meraj Khalid elected as the speaker of the National Assembly. Political adjustment with those policies which were cardinal for the security and better image of the country, accepted with open-mind by the new government. Party that was in majority gave the impression that it will honor the mandate of the people and through the dialogue in the assembly and outside will strengthen the spirit and process of accountability which will have a direct bearing on public will. On the return of democracy in Pakistan American Senator, Claiborne Pell-Chairman of the Senate foreign relations committee- said in his report that "All parties have a stake in the success of the current democratic government and all parties will suffer including opposition if Pakistan's democracy is overthrown".<sup>9</sup>

Coalitions of the different parties in the assemblies resolve the issue of government making amicably and no ideological cleavages set the system apart but hailing it with the sense of maturity to cope with considerations of the system and make their appearance in such consociation that they are the indispensable ingredients for the better functioning of the system. The mist of uncertainty shrouding the final phase of the electoral exercise gave rise to many misgivings. Apprehensions were expressed that there is reluctance on the part of the establishment to transfer power. There was also speculation that there is proposal for the national government as a move to forestall the advent of PPP rule.<sup>10</sup> But all happened contrary to it and power was transferred to the civilian representatives smoothly.

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<sup>8</sup> *The Nation*, The Verdict, November 25, 1988.

<sup>9</sup> *Dawn*, October 2, 1989.

<sup>10</sup> A story published in the Financial Times which indicated the chances of military coup against the civilian government of Benazir Bhutto that was condemned by the ISPR (Inter Services Public Relations) and the Government as baseless, and without

The Army Chief, Gen. Mirza Aslam Beg himself time and again took the initiative to clarify to the people that "Army's role is to provide the umbrella of internal and external security under which then established political system could run its course for the realization of the national goals of socio-economic progress".<sup>11</sup>

In 1988 for the formation of the government in the centre different political parties (e.g., Muahjir Qaumi Movement, Awami National Party, IJI, Jammiat Ulama-i-Islam (F) and PPP) contacted with each other. The IJI's victory in the Punjab provincial elections with the majority of the seats 108(45%) of the total seats- had the edge of 6% from that which it took in the centre 55 (39%), allured the independent pundits to join the possible government making party and thus at least 20 independents signed the PML(Pakistan Muslim League) membership form.<sup>12</sup> National parties always eulogized their national posture and allured the smallest or the regional parties to their programme.

Regional parties and leaders of provinces other than Punjab had similar concerns over the issues which were presented by major parties in their political programmes. Daily news paper, 'The Nation' conducted the interview with Fazale Haq, Ex Chief Minister, of NWFP in the interim setup of 1988 and with Wali Khan, leader of ANP(Awami National Party), published in march 2,3 of 1989 in which perception of both leaders was same about the development of the province and the country.<sup>13</sup>

Altaf Hussain the head of MQM (Muhajir Quami Movement, now Mutehida Quami Movement) in an interview with 'The Muslim' expressed his feeling in the same tone that "we have challenged the feudalism and their domination in the country. We want to promote harmony and peace among different ethnic

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any facts. Later author of the story, Christana Lamb cleared that chances of all about military coup can not set aside in Pakistan where the political government has to face the colossal agenda of democratic normalization. Benazir Government sensed the delicacies of the circumstances and prepared to work in cooperation with the forces of the pillars of the state. See *The Nation*, Election 88 - The Final Fact, November 24, 1988.

<sup>11</sup> *Dawn*, September 13, 1989.

<sup>12</sup> *The Nation*, Nov 22, 1988.

<sup>13</sup> Fazale Haq remained the Governor and the Martial Law Administrator of NWFP during Zia period. He said that: 'There should be alternative of Kalabagh Dam like the construction of another tunnel from Tarbela dam for energy needs and abandonment of narcotics trade and cultivation with the provision of employment opportunities. Wali Khan clearly said about the Afghan issue that: 'I have no concern with it and I want to safeguard the interest of Pakistan.' *The Nation*, March 2-3, 1989.

groups. We have no clash of interests with a poor Punjabi, Sindhi or Pashtoon whether he lives in Sindh or somewhere else".<sup>14</sup>

Interestingly before the formation of the national government in 1988, IJI and MQM desired to coordinate with each other in the formation of government at the centre. It was conditional if IJI accepts the demand of the smaller party – recognizing the Muahjir the fifth nationality. IJI refused to accommodate on this demand.<sup>15</sup>

Process of government making started in the provinces with new zeal and vigour. In the North West Frontier Province Assembly as many as 10 IJI MPAs (Members of Provincial Assembly) formed a separate group named 'IJI Democrat' under the leadership of Ayub Tanoli expressed their full confidence over the leadership of Aftab Ahmed Khan Sherpao, Chief Minister of PPP.<sup>16</sup> This kind of behavior of political adjustment was visible in the election of the senate when the members of the IJI supported the candidate of PPP, Iftikhar Hussain Gilani -in his membership of Senate- instead of their own candidate- Tahir Mahmood.<sup>17</sup> In this perspective Seymour Martin Lipset says that "chances for stable democracy are enhanced to the extent that groups and individuals have a number of cross cutting, politically relevant affiliations".<sup>18</sup>

### **Adjustment of PPP and MQM over Issues of Collective Concerns:**

Mr Azim Ahmed Tariq chairman of the MQM (Muajhir Qaumi Movement) and close confidant of the Altaf Hussain said that "we want to solve the problems and we have an open mind but naturally the ideal position would be if we have the alliance with the same party in the centre and the province".<sup>19</sup> After formation of government in the centre, PPP and MQM issued joint declaration that "they will singly and jointly protect and safeguard the interests of all persons resided in Sindh irrespective of their religion, caste, creed, language or origin of birth. Administration will be conducted on accepted norms of good government".<sup>20</sup>

Both parties also joined hands in the province of Sindh to form the government for the betterment of the province and the country in spite of the

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<sup>14</sup> *The Muslim*, May 25, 1989.

<sup>15</sup> Nawaz Sharief-leader of IJI- conceded the demands of the repatriation of the stranded Pakistanis in Bangladesh, holding of a new census and the 40:60 ratios in employment. *The Nation*, November 25, 1988.

<sup>16</sup> *The Nation*, January 20, 1989.

<sup>17</sup> *The Nation*, January 4, 1989.

<sup>18</sup> Seymour Martin Lipset, *Political Man*, William Heinemann Ltd, London, 1960, pp.88-89.

<sup>19</sup> *The Nation*, MQM negotiating its post poll strategy with PPP, IJI, Nov 22, 1988.

<sup>20</sup> *The Nation*, December 3, 1988.

PPP majority of seats in Sindh Assembly. Principles of good government had never been compromised for the sake of vested interests. To solve the problems of the Sindh in which law and order remained the top priority of the Sindh Government called for the round table conference on Sindh to involve the other political forces unbiased which have no public mandate except one representative of the regionalist forces in Sindh Assembly to jointly chalk out a plan for peace in Sindh.

The legitimate concerns of all stake holders were tried to be realized in the scheme of political accommodation. There was reluctance on the part of the government to adjust with those demands and opinions which were projecting the views and interests of few at the altar of majority. For the meaningful effort to bring peace and stability in the province, Sindh Chief Minister Qaim Ali Shah rescinded the pledge of cooperation with the MQM over its illegitimate demand of releasing the MQM prisoners from jail who had been involved in different crimes of burglary and murder.<sup>21</sup> MQM exerted undue stress on the government to fulfill her demands on the pretext of different excuses.

On the detention of the MQM leader, Altaf Hussain at the residence of Hyderabad's mayor, gave the safe passage to the MQM to pullout from Sindh government with out describing any major cause of this breach. Ministers of MQM in Sindh Government tendered their resignation in protest and chairman of the party Azem Ahmed Tariq declared that administration of Hyderabad must be changed.<sup>22</sup> Taking the country out of the turbulence of the political uncertainty in which it has been wallowing ever-since the overthrow of the political government in 1977, was the onerous of the political parties which have been supported in this election in spite of their long absence from the political scene. MQM leadership showed a little bit sympathetic attitude of cooperation with the central PPP government by declaring that it will continue to support the PPP in the National Assembly.<sup>23</sup> The Chief Minister delayed the acceptance of the resignations underlined his resolve to mend fences and kept the coalition intact.<sup>24</sup>

The attitude of PPP stalwart and of MQM showed that they have had a consensus on governmental structure and process. It was the empirical evidence of mature political far sightedness. Arend Lijphart opined the observation of Gabriel Almond in this regard that such kind of political adjustment leads to political stability on the premise of relationship between political culture and social structure. Gabriel Almond distinguishes between stable democracies and immbolistic democracies, while latter are characterized

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<sup>21</sup> *The Nation*, March 9, 1989.

<sup>22</sup> *The Muslim*, May 3, 1989.

<sup>23</sup> *The Muslim*, May 4, 1989.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

by fragmentation both in a cultural and structural sense—the pressures toward moderate middle of the road attitudes are absent.<sup>25</sup> So it was not the case for Pakistan in the later generalization of absence of pressures for moderate attitude because every stake holders in power game showed their flexibility to accommodate each other.

### **National and Regional parties' Response towards Agenda of Concerns:**

It was very surprising when Balochistan Assembly was dissolved by the Governor General (ret'd) Musa on the 15 of December 1988 on the advice of the Chief Minister, Jamali within one month of its election due to the precarious balance of vote between the Jamali-PPP and BNA-JUI. Zafrullah Jamali got the 21 votes in the assembly-consists of 39 elected members, 3 minorities and 2 women. It was contest of 21-21 when one member of JUI left the assembly hall before casting his vote and the final vote of decision was cast by the speaker in favour of Jamali. This act of governor on the incite of the Jamali could not get the approval of all the parties like Jammiat Ulamma-i-Islam, Balochistan National Alliance and Awami National Party.<sup>26</sup> Assembly was restored by the provincial High Court and PPP acted very wisely in this affair by refraining from appealing against the High Court verdict. It upheld the spirit of the constitution and the democracy. Nawab Akbar Bugti became the new Chief Minister of the Balochistan by virtue of BNA's alliance with JUI, IJI and Pukhtoon Khawa Awami Milli Ittehad holding confidence of 32 MPAs.<sup>27</sup> The political support of these different ideological parties for the Bugti showed their sense of maturity to control the affairs of the province by themselves and not let their personal agendas to hinder the work of the government which had the legitimate support of the representative parties.

Political parties try to fulfill their agenda either they form the government or remain outside the government formation. Those parties which play their role in opposition make the government to realize their demand by developing either consensus with the government or pursue it through other means of political maneuvering by the pressure tactics where the demands are considered legitimate. After the smooth sailing of the provincial coalition government of NWFP, a rift appeared when ANP five ministers resigned that a pledge has not been honored by the PPP government to appoint the governor of the province of their party. But contrary to it, this move of the ANP-to have the Governor of their liking- was checked by the president of Pakistan who

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<sup>25</sup> Immobilism was the consequence of fragmented condition of political culture of Continental Europe when he compared it with Anglo-American political system which was more stable. He derives its theoretical significance from relationship between political culture and social structure on the one hand and political stability on the other hand. Arend Ljpart, *Consociational Democracy*, *World Politics*, Vol.21, January 1969, pp.208-9, pp.207-225.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> *The Nation*, February 6, 1989.

had the personal grudge against the ANP which had not supported the president in his election.<sup>28</sup> So the personal and narrow concerns of the president and the ANP prevailed that given the shocks to the resilient democratic process which had returned after the 11 years of military rule.

When agenda of the ANP was not honoured, they formed an alliance with the IJI to which ANP remained very critical due to IJI's Afghan policy and its inclination toward the establishment. Over this move of ANP some of its central working committee members deserted the party and their right of err and dissent was accepted and Wali Khan justified the Alliance on the plea that it has been formed to look after the interests of the electorate.<sup>29</sup> In federal system of government the needs, perspectives and policies of the men in power at the centre and in the provinces often differ. Disagreements between the federal and provincial governments were inevitable when they pursued their ideological pushed agenda but should not let them to degenerate the federation. No interest was loftier than national interest and no manifesto was holier than the agenda of national integration.

### **Centre-Province Relationship and Approach to the Issues:**

The conflict aroused between the centre and the province of Punjab and Balochistan over the issues of public funds-used in the name of peoples work programme- apportionment of Zakat Fund, provincial authority to create the independent bank and power generating authority. For the settlement of these issues, constitutional institutions regularly employed like ECC (Economic Coordination Committee), CCI (Council of Common Interest) and another new body was created in the name of PCC (Provincial Coordination Committee). PCC was stemmed from the desire to create a forum which could provide the opportunities for resolving the conflicts, differences and containing the tension they tend to generate.<sup>30</sup> The rift between the centre and the provinces particular of Punjab sapped the energies of the political government. Instead of adopting modus vivendi in their working they obstructed each other moves related to the agenda of development.

Punjab government made some objection over the modalities of peoples programme and in response central government stopped the supply of railway wagons to Ittefaq Foundary-owned by Sharief family and caused the loss of 31 crore rupees to the government exchequer in the shape of taxes.<sup>31</sup> Such

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<sup>28</sup> *The Muslim*, May 1, 1989.

<sup>29</sup> *The Muslim*, IJI-ANP Alliance: Impact on the left, June 24, 1989.

<sup>30</sup> PCC (provincial coordination committee) with minister for law and justice and provincial coordination as its chairman worked for inter-provincial coordination relating to economic, administrative, cultural, educational, industry, trade and commerce fields, *Dawn*, August 7, 1989.

<sup>31</sup> *Dawn*, October 2, 1989.

action of both the governments was taken as a bad omen by the political pundits who also welcomed the Pakistan re-entry in Common Wealth after 17 years ousted. Queen Elizabeth-ii gave her message to the government and people of Pakistan "As head of the Common Wealth I send my warmest good wishes and greetings to the people of Pakistan on the return of your country to the Common Wealth and it is the occasion of satisfaction to all the fellow members".<sup>32</sup>

Confrontation between the centre and the province sapped most of the energies for which different centres of the power like the presidency urged both the governments to reconcile their differences and said that democracy is an essential prerequisite for progress and development and Pakistan will come out of its present difficulties but for that it is essential that we realize that 42 years is along enough period for any nation to overcome its internal problems. Ghulam Ishaq Khan further said that

"Political parties are indispensable for a democratic system. They groom the political consciousness, articulate their wishes and reflect their aspirations into national policies. It may represent a particular group or class but it is expected to keep the entire nation's interest in mind and not those of its supporters alone".<sup>33</sup>

On the other hand opposition played very positive role in the NWFP Assembly to criticize the Provincial Government in curbing the freedom of movement when provincial government served the externment order to the IJI senator, Asif Fashiuddin Verdag on the plea that he had been involved in political bargaining of provincial politics but later due to the criticism of the parties in the assemblies and the pressure of the civil society NWFP Government withdrew the externment order.<sup>34</sup> It was indeed subjective explanation of the demands but it was the effectiveness of the system to absorb the demands and gave them due weight-age. Whenever opposition parties coalesced they did better trimming of the ruling party in making policies and implementing different decisions.

Benazir called on the meeting of the federal cabinet on March 8, 1990 to discuss the sensitive issues of internal and external concerns due to the internal law and order situation and the movement of forces at the border for the unrest in occupied Kashmir. This meeting was attended by the chief

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<sup>32</sup> Pakistan left the Common Wealth in 1972 under protest when the member countries one by one started recognizing the newly independent eastern wing of Pakistan, Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> *Dawn*, March 9, 1990.

<sup>34</sup> *The Muslim*, June 22 and 23 1989.

ministers of Punjab and Balochistan and without raising any issue of contention pledged to extend their support and cooperation for forging national consensus on the priority issues.<sup>35</sup> This kind of attitude of conformity eulogized the political ethos of the nation.

There were some of the problems of understanding of each other's concerns over the development matters between the centre and the province of Punjab made the working of both governments problematic. The concerns were not of opposite nature but were of mutual concern like the problem of unemployment, poverty, price hike, Kashmir issue and the problem of corruption. In the spirit of reconciliation both sides nominated some of the personalities to negotiate with each other and found the solution of the problems which have created the mistrust between the political leaderships of PPP and IJI.

Punjab Chief Minister constituted a committee, headed by the PML parliamentary leader, Chaudhry Shujat Hussain to negotiate with the PPP nominated personalities, Yousuf Razza Gillani and Malik Muhammad Qasim.<sup>36</sup> No doubt it was good move to strengthen the centre–province relations and the democratic process for the development of the all four provinces. The Centre–Punjab conciliation committee agreed to make a common cause against floor crossing which affected badly the body politic of Pakistan. The series of talks were held and the two sides decided to consider the measures for effective anti defection legislation and proposal for constitutional amendment.<sup>37</sup>

### **Stance of Parties and Government on Foreign Policy Issues:**

Benazir after assuming the office stated that Afghan policy will continue and Sahbzada Yaqub will work as foreign minister.<sup>38</sup> She announced on radio and television that normalcy with India and Russia required more. So far as India was concerned she hoped to turn a new leaf by harking back to the Simla Accord.<sup>39</sup> In democracy, leaders show the art of compromise, accommodation, tolerance and forbearance for the better projection of the life of the public whose conscious is raised in the electoral activity. So that was the will of the political government which amicably engaged the neighbor country for the solution of the long standing disputes to develop a confidence

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<sup>35</sup> *Dawn*, March 9, 1990.

<sup>36</sup> *Dawn*, May 4, 1990.

<sup>37</sup> Later this anti-defection clause was promulgated through presidential ordinance, called the Political Parties (amendment) Ordinance 1990 after the dissolution of the National Assembly. *The Nation*, October 23, 1990; *The Nation*, July 14, 1990.

<sup>38</sup> *The Nation*, Dec 4, 1988.

<sup>39</sup> Simla Accord was signed between India and Pakistan in 1972 after the separation of East Pakistan, *The Nation*, December 5, 1988.

for the other kind of contracts in various fields of life. In January 1989 at the concluding session of the SAARC<sup>40</sup> conference in Islamabad, India and Pakistan signed an agreement not to attack on each other nuclear installations. Such kind of attitude was adopted in the period of Zia-ul-Haq. The December 1985's visit of Zia to India, during which both sides agreed not to attack each other's nuclear facilities, ushered in a brief phase of cordiality, in which another agreement expanding trade was signed. In 1989 two other agreements were signed related to cultural cooperation and the avoidance of double taxation.<sup>41</sup> So this was the strength of political diplomacy which sought the friendship between equal and sovereign states. The IJI and its components except Jammat Islami supported the Geneva accord for the settlement of Afghan issue and the line of PPP was also similar to the position adopted by the components of IJI in supporting the Geneva Accord in 1988 election.<sup>42</sup> ANP and PNP of Bizenjo also favoured the solution of afghan problem in their manifesto of 1988. They showed their concerns that it could be solved only by engagement of all Afghan people to get the solution of their problem by their own.<sup>43</sup> Later on, the Afghan policy erupted some of the differences between the political governments' components particularly ANP's Wali Khan showed his concerns over the issue of Afghanistan. He declared that "...operations of Inter Services Intelligence prolonged the war and inflicted even greater hardships on both the Afghans as well as the people of the Frontier province".<sup>44</sup>

### **Role of Opposition Parties in Democratic Setup:**

IJI with the support of the different other parties like Awami National Party(ANP),Balochistan National Alliance(BNA), Jammiat Ulamma-i-Islam Fazal-ur-Rehman(JUI-F),Jammiat Ulamma-i-Pakistan(JUP),Muahjir Qaumi Movemnet(MQM), National Peoples Party(NPP) and Pakistan Democratic Party(PDP) formed a Combined Opposition in 1989, headed by Ghulam

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<sup>40</sup> The proposal for regional cooperation was initiated by president of Bangladesh, Zia-ur-Rehman in 1980. It was supported by Maldives, Bhutan, Nepal, and Sri Lanka. The proposal was finally discussed at a meeting of officials of the South Asian countries in Colombo in April 1981. They endorsed the view that regional cooperation was beneficial and necessary. After four years of preparatory work the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation was launched at a summit meeting at Dhaka in 1985, consisting of seven countries including India and Pakistan. Rafi Raza, (ed.), *Pakistan in Perspective 1947-1997*, Karachi,2007,p.133.

<sup>41</sup> *The Nation*, January 1, 1989.

<sup>42</sup> Jammat Islami and Jammiat Ulamma-i-Islam(F) were in agreement in solving the afghan problem but they were in favour of including the Afghan mujahdeen in the Geneva talks. *The Herald*, Election Special, November 1988, p.26.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>44</sup> Lawrence Ziring, *Pakistan in the Twentieth Century; A Political History*, Oxford University Press, Karachi,2001,p.517.

Mustafa Jatoi with out any ethnic biases, acceptable to all, showed how better they were united in their cause to give the government a sense that it will have to do it best in formulating the people oriented agenda.<sup>45</sup> The Combined Opposition Party (COP) did not allow the government to move ahead unscrupulously. They pressed the government to honor the pledge of maintain peace and stability in the country. The COP's leadership expressed utmost resentment and anguish over the killings of innocent people in Karachi on February 7, 1990 in which death toll was 60. The COP also called a meeting in which chief of COP Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi, Nawab Zada Nasrullah, Maulana Fazal-ur-Rehman, Maulana Abdull Sattar Khan Niazi, Chaudhry Sujjat Hussain, Begum Abida Hussain, Haji Ghulam Ahmed Bilour, Haji Qadir Gull, Hafiz Hussain Ahmed, Senator Mazhar Ali, Senator Khurshid Ahmed and Chaudhry Muhammad Ashraf participated and they passed the resolution to observe the February 16 as protest day through out the country.<sup>46</sup> On the other hand Punjab Assembly which was headed by Nawaz Sharif, chief of IJI advised the Sindh government to take all political, social and religious organizations into confidence to restore peace in the province. Through a unanimously adopted resolution the members expressed grave concern over the prevailing situation. The resolution was jointly tabled by Mr. Wasi Zafar of PPP and Mehmudur Rashid of the IJI.<sup>47</sup> Resentment of the smaller parties or the factions with the central government over its lethargic response to their personalized agenda pushed the realignment of the groups and factions at the central level. MQM which was made the coalition partner in the Sindh government inspite of the PPP's absolute majority revoked the past affiliation and coalesced with the IJI. A new accord was signed by the MQM and IJI in which they pledged apparently for the supremacy of the parliament and stood for the oppressed and poor people of Pakistan but without any viable alternative to accommodate what had been transpired by the opposition groups.<sup>48</sup> The COP and their dependent groups took the advantage of the delicacy of the time and presented a resolution of no confidence in the Assembly against the government of the PPP. Islami Jamhoori Ittehad (IJI) and its allies' no confidence motion carried the signature of 86 members of national assembly. Moreover, only 119 MNAs in a house of 237 were needed to bring down the government.<sup>49</sup> On this move the BNM (Balochistan National Movement) chief, Dr Abdul Haye Baloch directed his party's MNAs not to extend their support to the no-confidence motion because it was based on the conspiracy against the downtrodden people and the national interest of

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<sup>45</sup> *The Muslim*, June 3, 1989.

<sup>46</sup> *Dawn*, February 10, 1990.

<sup>47</sup> *Dawn*, February 14, 1990.

<sup>48</sup> *Dawn*, October 25, 1989.

<sup>49</sup> Lawrence Ziring, Pakistan in 1989: The Politics of Stalemate, *Asian Survey*, Vol. 30, No. 2, February, 1990, p.131, pp. 126-135.

Pakistan.<sup>50</sup> Democracy went on trial after 11 months of restoration and it was the democratic right of the opposition to challenge the government if it went wrong against the interests of the public.

Benazir Bhutto before the voting in the assembly held out assurance to the public representatives that she had neither ran-cur nor ill will against those who have moved the no-trust motion against her. For a large part of its history Pakistan remained under totalitarian or pseudo democratic rules and it was the first such experience of its history when a democratic government had to face the challenge of no confidence motion but the neighbour country India saw 26 no-confidence moves against the elected governments in its post independence history. Curtain was drawn on November 1, 1989 when a week-long struggle of COP (Combined Opposition Parties) vote of no-confidence motion against Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto was defeated in the National Assembly by getting the 107 vote out of 237 members.<sup>51</sup> Commenting on the procedure by the speaker of the assembly, Malik Meraj Khalid said that first time in 42 years of Pakistan's history that a no-confidence motion has been moved against the government and final outcome was the Pakistani democracy seemed to be alive and well.<sup>52</sup>

Benazir pledged after this move that "she will go ahead with the intentions of national reconciliation".<sup>53</sup> To keep this pledge she inducted three new ministers in her cabinet two from Punjab and one from Balochistan. From Balochistan, Mr Ghulam Akbar Lasi was among the 107 MNAs who had voted for the no-confidence motion in the National Assembly while the other two came from the IJI benches.

A bill about the women's reserved seats was presented in the senate by the leader of the opposition, Muhammad Ali Hoti in December 1989 to ensure the continuation of the reservation of seats for at least one more general election and it was not opposed by the government benches.<sup>54</sup> The opposition also responded in the same call of reconciliation when the issue of women's seat was tabled for discussion. The agreement between the government and the opposition to extend the provision of women seats to the next general election came as a pleasant move to democracy. The unanimous decision for

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<sup>50</sup> For the acceptance of no confidence motion there is requirement of 60 members to support the motion for its debate and vote in the Assembly, *Dawn*, October 25 and 30, 1989.

<sup>51</sup> *Morning News(Karachi)*, November 1 and 2, 1989.

<sup>52</sup> Lawrence Ziring, *op.cit.*, p.133.

<sup>53</sup> Ghulam Ahmed Manika, who was close associate of Junejo became the Minister of Manpower and Overseas Pakistanis while Makhdoon Ahmed Alam Anwar from the bench of IJI assumed the charge of same office as a Minister of state, *Morning News(Karachi)*, November 13, 1989.

<sup>54</sup> The bill sought to amend the Article 51 of the Constitution to ensure the continuation of the reserved seats, *Dawn*, January 1, 1990.

the adoption of the bill to amend the constitution for this purpose was reached even without the COP leader, Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi.<sup>55</sup>

The democratic government of Benazir Bhutto attached special preference to the development of women in urban and rural areas and for this purpose her government in the budget of 1990-1991 allocated the amount of Rs.162.5million to the ministry of women's development. It was the democratic spirit of the government that it consulted various federal, provincial departments, NGOs, Zila councils and the social workers for the better implementation of the schemes and identification of the problem areas for their rectification.<sup>56</sup> In accordance with this allocation a large number of potential schemes were identified and approved in different sectors to assist the up lift of female population. The priority areas included, social awareness and social education, education and training, skill development and income generation, social welfare, community development, health, hygiene and nutrition.

On these fronts the role of the government party and its allies has been examined in their democratic adjustment with the parties of opposition to steer the country away from political instability and seemingly set the political ethos for the future role of political agents.

### **Conclusion:**

In this article it could be opined that political leadership has a vision to run the political process according to the political ethos in which they have been politically educated. It has endorsed that their political attitude was mature enough to reach the political decisions consensually and through intercommunicative linkages. One of the observations is that some of the non political forces may hinder the smooth sailing of democratic process which was the result of institutional imbalances. This imbalance was structured through constitutional design and it worked against the democratic forces due to un- matching of political ideals. This conflict of ideals created the obstacles in harmonizing the working relationships between the office of political executive, presidency and the civil-military elite. In its short span of government, Benazir Bhutto infused the spirit of political mobilization among the masses which aligned themselves with political entities with the realization of being an active agent of political bargaining.

Benazir government tried its best to adjust the views of all political stake holders in political decision making which unfortunately aborted due to the dismissal of government after the period of eighteen months. It was relatively

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<sup>55</sup> *Morning News (Karachi)*, December 12, 1989; Lawrence Ziring, *op.cit.* p.133.

<sup>56</sup> *Dawn*, June 8, 1990.

come out that political power was shared and it was the spirit of consociationalism which unfurled the political chess to absorb the grievances which were lent out in the form of input in political system.

It was the government of eighteen months which had to survive the shocks of law and order, political maneuverings and less bargaining aptitude of presidency. The conflict between the office of the executive and presidency resulted in the dissolution of the elected government. Here it could be cited that political stability could be accrued and sustained if there is much plausible attitude for political acts in the form of forbearance, bargaining and consensual way of approaching the issues of personal interests. Leon Hurwitz has had the view of political stability which is more reflecting the behavioral setup of Pakistan's institutions and incumbents. He stated that "a stable polity is seen as a peaceful, law abiding society where decision making and politico-societal change are the result of institutionalized eufunctional procedures and not the outcome of anomic processes which resolve issues through conflict and aggression"<sup>57</sup>.

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<sup>57</sup> Leon Hurwitz, Contemporary Approaches to Political Stability, *Comparative Politics*, Vol.5, April, 1973, p.449, pp.449-463.