

Crises of Democracy Pakistan

Zahoor Ahmed and Ishtiaq Ahmed

Abstract

Events in Pakistan after independence, examined by the author have different perceptions and references. One of them is the crisis of institutions within state to actualize the democratic problems. The purpose to write this research paper is to examine those forces who served major obstacles to undermine the democratization process in Pakistan. Although Pakistan has mixed feelings regarding democracy yet impacts are still to be researched. This research paper is an attempt to introduce a reasonable brief acquaintance with the history of Pakistan in terms of institutionalization process in Pakistan under the military and civilian regimes. In Pakistan the understanding towards institutionalization is at undermine level. Institutionalization process is a process which has dire need of understanding of norms and values of a subjected society. From 1947 to 1971 little bit importance had been given to democratic process but in post 1971 Era the institutions has been framed to promote the process of democracy. It has the clear thinking that Pakistan has self-centered political framework which denied the role of institutions.

Key words: Federation, Institutionalization, Authoritarian Leadership, Controlled Democracy, Distorted image of Democracy

Introduction:

After independence, the political leadership modified 1935 Govt. of India Act to run the affairs of state, called as Interim Constitution 1947. No doubt Pakistan adopted the federal form of government but the Governor General had been given special powers to approach the institutions. "The Constitutional theory of a Governor General in a Dominion is that he represents the King and bears the same relation to the Ministers forming the Government as the King does to his Ministers in the United Kingdom. It is recognized that the rights of a Dominion include the right of recommending a person for appointment as Governor General. But that the Governor Generalship should be held by an active party politician, who frankly states his intension of continuing his political leadership after assuming the office, is an innovation which radically alters the nature of the Dominion bond. The Viceroy

*Authors are Assistant Professor at Govt. Islamia College, Faisalabad, and Professor of Political Science at National Defense University, Islamabad - Pakistan

as Governor General has been hitherto, even though to a restricted degree in recent years, the supreme executive ruler and his Ministers have been simply the members of his Executive Council. By force of mental habit the man in the street will continue to think of the Governor General as being more important than his Prime Minister.” (Sayeed Bin Khalid, 2007)

The provinces had been remained kept under control of the central government. Authoritarian concept of governing the issue was observed at the initial share of independence (Hassan Askari Rizvi, N.D). The weak foundation of the political set up given the path to introduce the role of civil bureaucracy and military establishment. The political elites lacked of political experience are avoided to take up the issue in big spectrum. Finally, the military leadership forced to deal political affairs in collaboration with civilian bureaucracy. Governor General Ghulam Mohammad and Major General Iskander Mirza played authoritarian role to upset the political sphere of the political elites (Hassan Askari Rizvi, N.D). Extra Constitutional deeds extremely damaged the political process in the formative phase of Pakistan. “The ultimate authority vests in the people who will decide all issues including Constitutional issues through their representatives to be elected. Elections will be held as early as possible. Until such time as elections are held, the administration of the country will be carried on by a reconstituted Cabinet. He has called upon the Prime Minister to reform the Cabinet with a view to giving the country a vigorous and stable administration. The invitation has been accepted” (Federation of Pakistan vs Moulvi Tamizuddin Khan, 1995). It has been observed that after Jinnah, the role of Muslim League was demined and failed to slay leading character role to resolve national issues. The Muslim League’s response to the identity question was its slogan of the early 1950s: “One Nation, One State, and One Language”. Islam and the Urdu language were defined as the foundations of the Pakistani nation (two other components made up the state ideology: Kashmir as an inalienable part of Pakistan, and the armed forces as the guarantee of the country’s development and integrity” (Moskalenko, V.N., 2005).

Trends of Democracy in Pakistan:

It did not rationalize the problems, challenges and issues to construct sound policy parameters. The consensus on major issues was not developed and local political elites had griped over the political framework. Gradually, the both wings of Pakistan manipulated the political streamline in their own context. Widespread localization of political ideas weakened the main political forces and rained question marks regarding political and Constitutional issues and challenges. On issue of national language, the West Pakistan political

Democracy in Crisis in Pakistan

leadership had to face serious convergences. In 1954 Provincial election in East Pakistan, Muslim League had to face miserable defeat, resulted further disintegration of society. JUGTO Front swept out East Pakistan .The main agenda of the United Front's program were as follows: (Talukdar, Maniruzzaman, 1966: 83-98).

- Recognition of Bengali as an official language at par with Urdu.
- Rejection of the draft Constitution, the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly, and its replacement by a directly elected body.
- Complete autonomy for East Pakistan in all matters except defence, foreign policy, and currency, which would be reserved for the central legislature.
- Complete freedom from the centre with regard to export of jute.
- Consultation between the centre and East Pakistan on the allocation of foreign exchange for imports.
- Abolition of the Indo-Pakistani passport and visa system and of existing restrictions on trade between East and West Bengal. Devaluation of the Pakistani rupee.

While talking to the dissolution of the Provincial assemblies in post independence era, it has been opined "The Governor-General having considered the political crisis with which the country is faced, has with deep regret come to the conclusion that the constitutional machinery has broken down. He therefore has decided to declare a state of emergency throughout Pakistan. The Constituent Assembly as at present constituted has lost the confidence of the people and can no longer function. The ultimate authority vests in the people who will decide all issues including constitutional issues through their representatives to be elected. Elections will be held as early as possible. Until such time as elections are held, the administration of the country will be carried on by a reconstituted Cabinet. He has called upon the Prime Minister to reform the Cabinet with a view to giving the country a vigorous and stable administration. The invitation has been accepted. The security and stability of the country are of paramount importance. All personal, sectional and provincial interests must be subordinated to the supreme national interest" (Wilcox, Wayne Ayres, 1963). The continuous struggle for power among the political elites left negative panorama of institutionalization process in Pakistan. The civil-military bureaucracy derailed the total spectrum of political process in Pakistan. 1956 Constitution was a good attempt to deal the affair of the state but extra-Constitutional act of General Ayub Khan had undermined the good expectations from 1956 Constitution. Iskander Mirza invited General Ayub Khan and within next few days, the former was exiled and the latter captured political framework of Pakistan. General Ayub Khan

Zahoor Ahmed and Ishtiaq Ahmed

introduced 1962 Constitution, BD and did efforts to influence society through introducing land and industrial reforms. On political front, General Ayub Khan introduced controlled democracy and promoted centralized Constitutional and administrative structure. Through presidential election, he absolutely derailed the institutions and BD Members had been belayed an electorate college role to frame National Assembly. “The scheme of Basic Democracies has been evolved by us after a careful study of the experience of other countries and of the special conditions prevailing in our own land. There is no need for us to imitate blindly the type of democracies to be found in other countries. We have to work according to the requirements of our own nation and the genius of our own people” (Choudhry, G.W., 1967).

The Commission came to the conclusion that the parliamentary form of government had proved a failure and noted the following causes: (Karl Von Vorys, 1965).

- Lack of proper election procedure;
- Undue interference by the head of the state in the functioning of the government of the provinces: and
- Lack of well-organized and disciplined parties

According to Yasmeen, “Personal income inequalities increased during the period. Percentage of people living below poverty line increased both in number and as percentage of the total population. His trade and industrial policies were accompanied by a deliberate repression of wages. Workers’ wages declined about a third during the sixties. It is ironic that wages fell during the boom years of Pakistan’s industrial expansion. Social sectors such as education and health were also neglected. Rate of literacy in 1968 declined as population increase outpaced educational growth. Population growth rates remained high in spite of a family planning program which ran into implementation difficulties because of resistance from religious leaders. Population growth rate increased from 2.3 to 2.8 percent during the sixties. During the Ayub era Pakistan’s performance in education was the worst in Asia in terms of percentage of national expenditure allocated to education” (Yasmeen, Niaz Mohiuddin, 2006). The process to amend 1962 Constitution was extremely rigidly and not flexible so that National Assembly was absolutely unable to slay instructional role. It has been observed that Ayub Khan’s industrial reforms brought economic prosperity in Pakistan and his economic parameters consolidated after features of state. On security front, Tashkent Agreement did not prove his foreign capabilities and it had been criticized internally and externally (*The Pakistan Times*, February, 18). Mr. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, former foreign minister in his cabinet exposed his features

Democracy in Crisis in Pakistan

in 1965 war. It has been stated “No Government in Pakistan ever had such a healthy climate and opportunity to mould the Pakistani people into a nation of which not only posterity will feel proud but which would command the respect and admiration of the world at large. Such moments and opportunities in the lives of nations are rarely witnessed. It is a moment whose significance should be fully realized. It is a moment which should not be allowed to go unheeded. It is a moment of destiny for Pakistan”. The foreign newspaper reported prejudicial activities of the political activists, both individually and conjointly, were being received for some time past. In particular evidence is available to show that they had been persistently indulging in activities which were highly prejudicial to the maintenance of public order and peaceful conditions in the city of Lahore in particular and the Province in general. They had been advocating the use of force and violent methods, including the use of firearms. They had also started a regular campaign of creating discontentment and hatred among to public” (*Muslim News International*, 1965, November).

The imbalance political environment within state unbalanced him absolutely and finally he had to give political power to General Yahya Khan who made up his mind to play vital role in Pakistan’s politics. His legal Framework Order introduced 1970 Election and had furnished uncertain picture in both Wings of Pakistan. PPP led by Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto and Sheikh Mujeeb-u-Rehman, leadership of Awami League tussled over power gaining but failed to settle issues which finally brought complete separation. As stated by Brian Cloughley, “Yahya’s administration came to regard Bengalis as revolutionary rabble. They considered Mujeeb inflexibility in the matter of six points to be the root of the crisis but failed to realize how crucial they were to him, the Awami League and the people of Pakistan” (Gilmartin, David ed., 2003).

In new Pakistan, 1973 Constitution was framed and civilian political leadership had expanded his role in state’s affairs. During this period institutions were accorded to articulate internal and external affairs. The foreign policy parameters of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto annoyed the western powers and finally he had been overthrown from power. 1979 Soviet’s invasion in Afghanistan supported Zia-ul-Haq and he suspended are political activities. Zia-ul-Haq conducted ‘Referendum’ and unopposed elected as President of Pakistan. A referendum was held in 1984 that conformed Zia's policy of Islamization. “Zia's government also adapted Ayub's Basic Democracies structure to institute a new system of local government. Local councils were organized into tiers with union councils at the base, sub district councils above them, and district councils at the top. The system also included municipal committees and municipal corporations in the larger metropolitan centers. Councilors were elected for four year terms. The councils were designed to meet the needs of

Zahoor Ahmed and Ishtiaq Ahmed

the people at grass-root level. Elections were conducted without formal political party affiliation or involvement. The councils were to concentrate on improving local development, including agricultural production, education, health, roads, and water supply” (Zia-ul-Haq 1977-88, <http://www.country-data.com/cgi-bin/query/r-859.html> accessed on 8.02.2010). After Zia’s death, the political process was expanded to civilian role when two times Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif had been elected. Once again, military overthrown Nawaz Sharif government in 1999 and Pervaiz Musharraf had taken up responsibility of Chief Executive. “Not only have all the institutions been played around with, and systematically destroyed, even the economy is in a state of collapse...Self-serving policies have rocked the foundations of the Federation of Pakistan. My singular concern has been the well being of our country alone...the armed forces have moved in as a last resort to prevent any further destabilization” (Address to Nation General Musharraf, 1999). In Musharraf regime, the reforms had been introduced; one of them was local Government Ordinance 2000. Through this ordinance grass root level politics had been introduced. 17th Amendment had been introduced which changed feature of 1973 Constitution. President had been given more constitutional privilege and Prime Minister had been placed as sub-ordinance to former. King Party dominated political framework and finally due to internal dissonance, Musharraf had to impose Constitutional Emergency, ruled the fundamental rights of a citizen. This extra-Constitutional act was challenged in supreme court and League’ movement was launched to restore independence of judiciary. It was an alarming situation for Pervaiz Musharraf and after 2008 Election, political situation was changed. Pakistan peoples party (PPP) and Muslim League (N) joined together and finally constituted federal government. It has been observed that joined federal cabinet in an unnatural alliance and soon it would be vanished. The same exportations come true and Muslim League (N) had discarded itself from government. According to U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan Nancy Powell in August 2004: “America wants to see strong Pakistani democratic institutions and practices, including a National Assembly, Senate, and Provincial Assemblies that play a vigorous and positive role in governance and an independent judiciary that promotes the rule of law. We also would like to see Pakistan’s civil society play an active role in governance” (Ambassador Powell Outlines U.S. Policy toward Pakistan, 2004).

Ayesha Jalal on the other hand gives her understanding about difference, brought about by colonial period. She therefore, argues that: the British effort to stretch the ambit of imperial control through rule bound institutions based on Western concept of contractual law and impersonalized sovereignty rather than on the personal patronage of rulers was without historical precedent in

Democracy in Crisis in Pakistan

the Sub-Continent, so too were the consequences. A political unity conceived and constructed in cold-blooded fashion and frozen in the impersonal rationality of bureaucratic institutions, could neither reflect nor capture the internal dynamics of a society accustomed to direct personalized rule (Ayesha Jalal, N.D)

Institutionalization Process Through Democracy:

Democracy is a political system which has specific orientation regarding 'input' and 'output' structure. Within 'democracy' treated as implication or theory, the word 'people' has importance, referred to an aggregate of society to a collective mean. The word democracy is considered an absolute truth to overcome the illness of society. People govern the government and government is governed by the people. In retrospective way, both are obliged to each other in search for legitimacy. Democracy is called a process of the political decisions whose justification is hidden within democratic political culture. The classical theorists argued that democracy is the supremacy of the people, stands for 'goodness' and 'rule of law'. Equality and liberty are rationalized connected idea of democratic values and norms. Democracy as institution has been treated and has been viewed in different ways. Plato addressed 'democracy' in fear mode and further expressed individual's liberty to a minimum certain level. Plato argued that democracies can weaken state and individual. On contrary to Plato, Aristotle discussed 'democracy' with ethical principles. As institution, democracy should be applied in both ways like to rule and to be ruled. Aristotle acknowledged 'democracy' as original rational capability of the state's matters of existence. From Locke's perspective, 'democracy' is the ultimate source to provide legitimacy to authority or state's institutions. Representatives are elected and power is delegated which build up a connection to ensure the balanced relationship between individual and state. Locke did not advocate extreme form of individualism and referred as protection of the institutions. Locke said that government is responsible for protecting freedom and rights if the ruling elite wants to avoid 'revolution'. From Plato to Karl Marx, the word 'democracy' has been taken as practical organization of the state to achieve progress and performance regarding freedom, rights, equality, institution and leadership.

Democracy has attained serious attention in Pakistan after independence but in 'theory' not in 'practical' form. At the same time, Pakistan experienced democracy in different form. Parliamentary and presidential both forms of governments had been politically approached. Besides this, referendum played 'unusual' role in political spectrum of Pakistan. As a new state, Pakistan has legacy with the British government. Shortly after independence,

Zahoor Ahmed and Ishtiaq Ahmed

Pakistan meets a new debate. Either Pakistan should be secular state or Islamic state. No doubt, 'religion' played extensive role in the existence of Pakistan. It has been debated by the modern secular and traditional component to articulate state's features. Pakistan has to start its political voyage with such complicated but influential debate. This thing created frustration not only within citizens but also captured the political elite. No doubt in saying, Quaid-e-Azam had defined the state's image features and constitutional parameters. Quaid-e-Azam did not bother to approach apparent differences of the citizens and strongly favored to Islamic welfare state, opposed to theocracy. Pakistan has been demanded on the basis of Islamic ideology, stands for creation of a civil society. Quaid said "we are starting with this fundamental principle that we are all citizens and equal citizens of one state" He once clearly stated that our Prophet, Hazrat Mohammad (PBUH) had laid down foundation of our constitution and vision of state. Islam has taught us the teachings of democracy and it has expressed all matters, related to man's social, economic, political and cultural values. Subject to the thinking of Quaid-e-Azam, Pakistan should be Islamic welfare state neither 'secular' nor 'theocratic'. Since 1947 to 1956, Pakistan experienced amended 1935 India Act and non-elected representatives. Constituent Assembly was framed to design constitution of state but all issues were made politicized. After longstanding efforts, a compromised formula was shaped between East Pakistan and West Pakistan which positively removed political differences to some extent. It was a good political thinking that finally issues were acknowledged on political terms.

Democracy in itself in the system of government which in approached through people as Abraham Lincoln said, "Democracy is government of the people, for the people, by the people" Pakistan since independence had witness of four martial law regimes which introduced controlled democracy. Ch. Muhammad Ali, Ghulam Mohammad and Iskander Mirza neither belonging to political parties but captured complete stage. In 1956 Constitution, the three legislative items had been introduced but in 1962 Constitution, the centralized structure of government had been followed. The provincial autonomy had not been delivered whereas One Unit scheme was polarized. In 1973 constitution the importance had been given provincial autonomy and federal – province relationship had been maintained. Recently, 19th Amendment introduced complete provincial autonomy and provincial legislative list was recurred to smooth the progress.

Conclusion:

Democracy in Crisis in Pakistan

Despite the fact that the political history of Pakistan has seen many military regimes and weak political dispensation, there is a need for taking certain steps to achieve the true spirit of institutionalization in Pakistan. Firstly, the democratic process in Pakistan should be allowed to prevail and the military interference in the form of coups or otherwise is to be discouraged. This can be achieved through accepting each other's mandate by the political parties. India is a successful example to be followed. Throughout the Indian history, the Indian political leadership has learnt to resolve their problems themselves without being led by the military rulers. Britain the oldest democracy has followed and supported the spirit of democracy to strengthen institutions and has taken centuries to be called the greatest democracy of the world.

Separation of powers for the three pillars of the state as envisaged in the Constitution is necessary for attaining institutionalization in Pakistan. Because of weak institutions, the executive has been controlling judiciary and has made legislature literally subservient. But in the current scenario judiciary has asserted itself and has even brought the executive to the toes in the cases in which executive has failed to deliver. The US is an excellent example of separation of powers. Even the populist leaders like President Wilson who gave the idea of League of the nations could not get membership of this organization because of opposition from the Senate. Media plays an important role in supporting the other three pillars of the state. An effective and positive media through objective and transparent reporting can lead to strong institutions in Pakistan. No doubt media in Pakistan is still said to be in the stage of infancy but it has played pivotal role in restoration of judiciary during lawyers movement and it has even contributed in the awakening of the civil society which otherwise has been dormant.

Democratization is a process which require of specific dimension to approach democracy. In Pakistan, military rule had damaged political process and had strengthened military bureaucracy to keep itself in power. The domination of military rule did not space to civilian leadership. Second, decentralization had been introduced but not in actual strength. Ayub Khan BD system was an electorate college to facilitate state's role in co-ordinate with military bureaucracy. Zia-ul-Haq and Pervaiz Musharraf had followed same strategy in context of referendum and local government polities. Third, the post independence colonial type political infrastructure had placed only structure of political system. Finally, the role of judiciary had been undermined and had been controlled directly and indirectly.

The 2008 elections results proved to be a nightmare for the members of the ruling party who were badly defeated as they could not resolve many national problems. Peoples Party Parliamentarians which emerged as the largest

Zahoor Ahmed and Ishtiaq Ahmed

political party had to form coalition government because split mandate was available with the various political parties. PMLN was initially part of this government but later on withdrew from the government due to political differences and played the role of friendly opposition. No doubt the previous regime is criticized due to its failure at governance level but credit goes to it that it is the first elected government which has completed its tenure despite facing many challenges at internal and external front. Many a time, scandals like Memo Gate scandal and the issue of implementing orders of the Supreme Court regarding writing letter to Swiss authorities in NRO case brought the government in direct confrontation with the military and the judiciary respectively. Similarly, the government also faced contempt of court proceedings in many cases due to non implementation of orders of the Supreme Court. But the government successfully handled all the crises with the spirit of tolerance. At the same time, the previous government miserably failed at controlling law and order situation of the country. Suicide attacks have terrorized the whole nation. The Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan has carried out attacks against the security forces and thus weakened writ of the state not only in the tribal region of the country but also in the settled areas. At Constitutional level, the previous government has introduced 18th Amendment in the constitution to purge the constitution of provisions inserted by the dictators and to make it democratic in nature by empowering the prime minister. Thus Supremacy of the Constitution was upheld for institutionalization in Pakistan. In the same way, the 7th NFC Award is another landmark achievement by which financial autonomy has been guaranteed to the provinces. The completion of tenure by the previous is celebrated as a victory for democracy in Pakistan and Pakistan has won international applause in this regard.

Democracy in Crisis in Pakistan

End Notes

1. Khalid, Sayeed Bin (2007). *The Formative Phase of Pakistan 1857-1948*, Karachi: Oxford University Press.
2. Rizvi, Hassan Askari (N.D.). *Democracy in Pakistan*, paper Prepared for the Project on State of democracy in South Asia, Center for the Study of Developing studies, New Delhi, India.
3. (1995). *Federation of Pakistan vs Moulvi Tamizuddin Khan*, PLD, Federal Court 240
4. Moskalenko, V.N.(2005). "Pakistan: Politichesky islam ili islam v politike?," in *Islam i obshchestvennoy razvitiye v nachale XX veka*, ed. V. Y. Belokrenitsky, A. Z. Yegorin and N. Y. Ulchenko, 391, Moscow.
5. Talukdar, Maniruzzaman (1966). *Group Interests in Pakistan Politics, 1947-58* *Pacific Affairs*, Vol.39.
6. Wilcox, Wayne Ayres (1963). *Pakistan: The Consolidation of A Nation*, New York: Columbia University Press.
7. Choudhry, G.W. (1967). *Documents and Speeches in the Constitution of Pakistan*, Dhaka: Green Book House.
8. Karl Von Vorys (1965). *Political Developments in Pakistan*, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
9. Yasmeen, Niaz Mohiuddin (2006). *Pakistan: A Global Studies Hand Book*, Oxford ABC-CLIO.
10. PRESS NOTE (1966). *The Pakistan Times*, February 18.
11. Muslim News International (1965), November, Karachi.
12. Gilmartin, David (ed.) (2003). *Pakistan at the Millennium*. Karachi: Oxford University Press.
13. Zia-ul-Haq 1977-88, *Nations Encyclopedia*, Federal Research Division of the Library of Congress. available at <http://www.country-data.com/cgi-bin/query/r-859.html>; accessed on 8.02.2010
14. General Musharraf (1999). Televised address to the nation, 13 October.

