
Electoral Politics in Pakistan: First Half Decade of the 21st Century

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The elections in Pakistan did not come upto the international criteria of “free and fair” long before Gen. Pervez Musharraf took over in a military coup in the October 1999. The era of military rule of Pervez Musharraf meant that elections were held regularly and their impartiality was often challenged. The privacy of the ballot in the elections under Musharraf has not always been preserved and applies by election commission of Pakistan due to the influence of local feudal and tribal leaders, who had repeatedly cooperated for the free will of voters. The military regime had frequently placed severe restrictions on the rights of people to the freedom of expression, assembly, movement and association. Pervez Musharraf had pledged the nation to hand over the power to elected representatives of Pakistan after the completion of the process of accountability and started the process of giving power to the people by holding elections of local bodies that followed the presidential referendum in the next year and general elections. He introduced a new local bodies system in 2000 and after the completion of his first four year term with success he undertook new local bodies elections in 2005 and in this way held four elections in five years, two local bodies one referendum and a general election of 2002 all in pursuit of political legitimacy of his dictatorship. The electoral development in Pakistan in the first half decade of 21st century in very important to analyze for the understanding of the electoral politics of the 2nd decade of the 21st century in Pakistan.

Keywords: Elections, Election Commission, Military Regime, Local Bodies, Dictatorship, Electoral Politics

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Introduction

In 1999, General Pervez Musharraf removed Nawaz Sharif's government in a military coup and sent an elected government on long leave. He imposed himself on the power seat; he pledged the return of the electoral government. To purge the politicians, he utilized the NAB (National Accountability Bureau) an institution that was raised by the elected government. He indicated his intentions towards the elections and started the journey with the local government ordinance in 2000, like former dictators of the history of Pakistan he introduced the local government system with a district government as basic unit in which the powers were transferred to the lower level and further to the union council.¹ Powers in the district government were given to the elected representatives of the people and empowered the local government system with funds for development. This initiative strengthened the local government system and supported the development and progress work in which the construction of roads, bridges and drains had special attention.

The focus on health, sports centers and sports fields was very powerful and clear improvement in public life was visible. Moreover, major departments were also given in control of the district government. Since the central and provincial governments face national and international pressures, they are unable to directly address the problems of the people and they ignore the regional issues. If proper attention and funds are not given, these issues become national issues very soon that give birth to different kinds of tragedy and history is a witness that these tragedies result in the removal of many elected governments and the dictators secure the opportunity to remove democracy. On the basis of their dictatorship, the establishment of a democratic nursery became a fashion in Pakistan. These interesting facts give different messages to the people of the world, due to which our structure and identity faces an incredible loss at the national and state level. This has a negative impact on our national identity at the regional and international level. Ministries related to basic education, health and drinking water, etc. were in the scope of the local governments since the system was different from the decent and developed countries. This system identifies the efforts of establishing basic democracy in the era of dictatorship but it was retarded in the democratic eras and the local governments were at the bottom in the priorities of democratic and elected governments in Pakistan. During the Pervez Musharraf period, according to the Local Government Act 2001 resulted in the local government being used for the first time and the slogan of the devolution of power was set down at the bottom of options.² It was announced that under the Union Council Nazim, Tehsil Nazim and District Nazim were going to be re-elected. There were two periods of local governments in the era of his power. After his removal the system was changed and elected governments of the people always tried to avoid the local government system. None of the elected government after Musharraf became willing to hold elections and transfer the powers to local level and empowered the people who had chosen them rejecting Pervez Musharraf. Musharraf who was a dictator hold two consecutive local bodies elections.³

Hypothesis;

Pervez Musharraf as a military dictator of Pakistan utilized the electoral process in Pakistan to strengthen his rule and demonstrated his pledge to return to an elected government of the people of Pakistan till 2005.

Literature review

Pervez Musharraf in his book 'In the Line of Fire' desperately attempted to obstruct the ruling of history by developing his own mythology in which the Indian factor is the essential as India is an enemy of Pakistan and the storyteller is the selected savior. Pervez Musharraf as a young military officer Remembrance is an amplification. To several Pakistanis, it appeared that this thoughtful and adorned army general from a contemporary and secular middle class family could deliver the nation. The two previous democratic governments of Pakistan of Benazir Bhutto and Mian Nawaz Sharif, with their record corruption and favoritism, not to mention the persistent pandering to conservative sentimentalities, had left various people let down. Musharraf could have delivered all that was promised by him, but he failed although in the beginning he did yield some steps toward contemporaneity. He was exposed in the process of elections that were held during his rule.⁴

2. Aqil Shah in the *Army and democracy* explained that the elected government in Pakistan seldom completed their tenures and power was transferred peacefully to another an elected government of the people. In the contrast to India, Pakistan has been ruled by the Pakistan army for more than thirty years. In the civilian era of power the army maintained their grip on power even when it was not directly ruling the state. India and Pakistan's armies inherited their institute, training, and principles from Britain, along with their code that considered politics as external from the domain of the army. But feeble national harmony of Pakistan, intensified by a attitude that saw war with India impending, authorized the army to take state security and eventually the regime into its own hands. The book *Army and Democracy* make available insight into the army's antagonistic relationship with the civilian régimes. The Author identifies steps for improving the armed forces and decreasing its intrusion in the politics, and sees lessons for breakable democracies determined to bring the army under the civilian control.⁵

3. The book "Articles on Elections in Pakistan, including: Pakistani General Election, 2008, Pakistani Presidential Election, 2008" by the author Qazi Muhammad Farooq, principally contains the articles accessible from Wikipedia or additional free sources online. Hephaestus publishing Books signifies an innovative publishing example, permitting different content sources to be created into organized, fitting, and informative books. The content of the book has been taken from the article and images from Wikipedia by Creative Commons licensing, though as Hephaestus publishers of Books endures to intensification in scope and measurement, more licensed and community sphere content is being more. they believed books like this signify a new and thrilling lexicon in the allocation of

human information. This specific book comprises chapters on Elections in Pakistan, with special reference to the 2008 elections of Pakistan. This also sheds light on the institution of the Election Commission of Pakistan, and role of Chief Election Commissioners of Pakistan. After all, at the national level, when people of Pakistan elected a bicameral parliament, it is the Parliament of Pakistan. This book also had the information about the electoral college of the President. In addition to the countrywide parliament and the four provincial assemblies, Pakistan also had additional five thousand elected representatives of local governments discussed in this book.⁶

Research Methodology;

The secondary sources of data are used in this study with qualitative methods of research methodology. The descriptive model of research is used to describe the facts and figures of electoral politics during first five years of 21st century in Pakistan and the comparative model of the research methodology are used to compare the figures regarding the elections that held from time to time till 2005 in Pakistan. The electoral development in Pakistan in the Musharraf era is very important to understand the prevailing electoral politics of Pakistan, so this research paper is based on the produced data that is analyzed to answer the question of public and political parties' response to the military rule of Musharraf and his check on the level of trust of the people in his regime. The changes in the percentage of the turnout is used as an indicator to check the level of public trust, in this regard help is taken from books, articles, newspapers and online material in this study.

Objectives;

1. To analyze the electoral politics under a military dictator in the context of public participation.
2. To explain the response of political parties towards the electoral process in Pakistan in the first half of the decade of 21st century.

Local Bodies Elections 2001

Pervez Musharraf made address to people of Pakistan on 14 August 2000, on the Pakistan Independence Day, and broadcasted the decentralization plan and the structure of party-less local bodies elections, which was planned to start in month of December, 2000 and probable to be finalized by May 2001. The second round of local bodies elections at the level of district was to be held in month of July next year, efficiently knocking municipal governments system back in the power. In direction to validate his pronouncement, Musharraf maintained said that Democracy started there at the level of district and formation of local governments. From there, he was moving up, gradually to the level of province and central level general election. Pervez Musharraf's plan of reinstating actual democracy through the local bodies elections was perceived by numerous as a maneuver to associate his individual power and continue his rule. His local bodies idea was obviously

intended to make a new authority base for the martial law regime. This strategy for the decentralization of power might in fact principal to the centralization of more authorities with the principal government at the cost of provincial autonomy in Pakistan. The first elections after the military coup in 1999 were held under the administration of the Election Commissioner of Pakistan (ECP). These were local bodies elections held in three phases that started from the December 2000 and ended in August 2001. These elections were held in the first phase for the Union Council on adult franchise bases and separate electorates.⁷ These elections were on non-party basis like the Gen. Zia experience of three local bodies elections of 1979, 1983, 1987 and general elections of 1985. The local bodies elections for the Town/Tehsil councils and district councils of Pakistan were held in two separate phases started in August 2001 and ended in September 2001, through a model of indirect election. These local bodies elections were held in 2001 under the separate Province wise ordinances that were promulgated for the said purpose. These were; (a) NWFP Local Government Ordinance of 2001; (b) Punjab Local Government Ordinance of 2001; (c) Sindh Local Government Ordinance of 2001; (d) Balochistan Local Government Ordinance of 2001. Though the local bodies elections were held on the basis of non-party candidature, it was a fact that a bulk of the elected Nazims and councilors had their own affiliations with mainstream political parties of Pakistan. The Election Commission of Pakistan maintained an electoral roll of qualified voters in Pakistan. The electoral roll of voters for Local Bodies Elections of 2001, had been restructured from the two registers initially accumulated for the local bodies election held in 2001.⁸ These two registers had separate electoral rolls containing the names of Muslim voters and non-Muslim voters, who had attained the age of franchise (18 years). There were 109 districts in Pakistan and 358 tehsils/talukas in the country and 6139 union councils in Pakistan in which local government elections were to be held. The number of members in the Union Council in 2001 elections were 21 elected to each union council in which 12 members were Muslim on general seats of which the four were reserved for women and six reserved for peasants/workers including the two seats reserved for women workers. Total number of seats in 2001 elections were 126,462 and 252,922 candidates were contesting on the seats 15,438 in the elections. 7,523 remained vacant where no election was contested. Per seat candidates in 2001 elections were 2 in the 2001 local government elections and 12.2 percent remained unopposed and 5.9 percent remained vacant. On the district Nazim 96 seats 501 candidates were contesting the elections. The turnout in the 2001 elections was highest in the Pervez Musharraf era of power as it touched 52.31 percent.⁹

Response of the political parties

Although the Local Government Election of 2001 was on non-party basis, formally the parties were banded to take part in election campaign but the political parties actively participated in the local government election of 2001 at every step from choosing of the contenders to campaigning for vote and day of elections and voting. After the elections all parties have also expressed their views to the means

of the procedure of elections 2001. The regime supporting parties like PML (Pakistan Muslim League) and MQM (Muhajir Quami Movement) described the LG elections of 2001 as a plain democratic presentation of military regime ending for electoral politics back in country which was going to reinforce electoral power of people. The federal government of Pakistan marked these LG elections of 2001 an impartial, free and fair electoral process after 1971. They accepted issues related to transparency as some complaints were received about loopholes. The significant opposition political forces like PML-N and PPP were doubtful about these reports and alleged the military régime of using its influence and resources to dispose the balance in its own favor and reinforced the candidates of parties initially welcoming the military regime. The key political parties in ARD (Alliance for Restoration of Democracy), rejected the military regime and its validation to conduct of the LG Elections in 2001 and declared that they would not take part in the future general elections announced to be held in 2002 under military Junta. They also called for the general elections to be held under the constitution of Pakistan that was abrogated by military in 1999. Likewise, the leadership of other parties disapproved the government for rigging in the LG election and declared that free and fair elections were not thinkable under military regime of Musharraf.¹⁰

Presidential Referendum May 2002

Even though several independent surveys about the popularity was conducted ahead of the presidential referendum that indicated a decline in the popularity of Military regime, and approximately all international and national media along with free observers were reporting a uninspiring turnout of polls in the presidential referendum. But when the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) announced the turnout up to 71 per cent that was highest in the history of Pakistan. Giving to the official figures of ECP, nearly 97.5 per cent of the voters gave a decision in favor of Pervez Musharraf, although a simple 2.5 per cent disallowed him. As per the census of 1998, there were majority of the people with 18-year age or above as number was 61.2 million in Pakistan. For the referendum election commission of Pakistan set up 87,074 polling stations for the day of polls along with the 163,641 supplementary polling booths across the Pakistan and 414,356 employees of public sector were hired to discharge electoral duties on the day of polling. The entire state was titled as single constituency and all voters aged 18 and above were believed qualified to vote by starting their identity from side to side any rational means.¹¹

According to the ECP 43,907,950 votes stayed balloted, out of which 42,804,030 stood in the agreeing, although the remaining 833,676 in negative. These figures translated by ECP into a 71 per cent turnout that stood highest in the electoral history of the country. Even though the victory of Pervez Musharraf was an unavoidable event, the whole workout had been intended to confirm that the turnout would be big enough to place the dreadfully required seal of legitimacy on the president's office. The military régime resorted to every conceivable tactic in

the book; from fraternizing with dishonest and immoral politicians in the country and holding public gatherings at public expenditure to employing the whole national machinery at the disposal of limited people in order to assure him an impressive majority in the polls.¹²

The voting age of citizens of Pakistan was reduced to 18 years for the presidential referendum and formerly, in one offhand blow, the requirement of checking voters' eligibility done by the national identity cards and the electoral lists of voters was also relinquished. The hundreds and thousands of local bodies leadership including the Nazims and councilors were vulnerable with extraction of regime support if they did not gather backing for the presidential referendum contained by their constituencies of influence.

Response Political Parties

Pervez Musharraf's regime depended on the backing of the leadership emerging in local governments for its drive intended at encompassing his rule for additional five years as president, which was willingly obtainable. All district Nazims, with their close political associations previously to the elections of local bodies, supported the campaign. Though, the pronouncement to backing or opposing the presidential referendum, might have given the impression a difficult time, it did not disturb and create major difficulties for the Nazims affiliated with the JI (Jamaat-i-Islami), PPP (Pakistan People's Party) and ANP (Awami National Party).¹³ The political parties selected one or the other to guise the other means or to let the elected legislative bodies support him. ANP (Awami National Party) yet, dealt with the condition in its particular way. Though President of ANP Asfandyar Wali Khan, had considered this referendum undemocratic, the party's central council had decided to refrain from the workout moderately than be pitted against it, in an ingenious policy intended to able its party Nazims and the councilors to support the campaign which they had done. The spectacular display of numerous red flags of ANP at the rallies of Pervez Musharraf, appeared to lend credibility to what many had labelled a prudently deliberate understood support policy. This on the other hand, signified a wide withdrawal from Asfandyar's previous declarations that parliament had well-defined the electoral college for president as comprising all provincial assemblies, National Assembly and Senate and his party was not going to support the presidential referendum.¹⁴

The PPP's Nazims kept an eye on their colleagues with equivalent amounts of enthusiasm. The provincial president of PPP in KPK claimed that he had dispensed notices to both Nazims and specified a committed stance to take punitive action in incident party leaders were found blasphemous to the party's line. It is another case that he could afford to annoy their party Nazims and councilors by compelling any action beside them, and by this means open up a sluiceway of defectors, remained doubtful. The district administrations, yet, was not the merely basis of strength for incumbent government. National Awami Party Pakistan, (NAPP), led by Aijmal Khattak and PPP faction of Aftab Khan Sherpao and Pakistan Muslim League (Q) also on condition that had open support, as predictable for military

dictator. provincial chapter of the PML-Q led by Salim Saifullah keep an eye on the party recommendation regarding backing to the regime. In addition to this Pakistan Tehrik-i-Insaaf (PTI) led by Imran Khan, Pakistan Awami Tehrik (PAT) led by Tahirul Qadri, Qaumi Jamhoori Party (QJP) led by Omer Asghar Khan and Pakistan Awami Party (PAP) also helped Musharraf in referendum. Musharraf supporters were asking the people to come out from their homes on April 30, 2002 to support a miserable or bright Pakistan and if they were wanted a bright future for their succeeding generations, they must vote for Pervez Musharraf in the presidential referendum. Pakistani's politicians, in support of the presidential referendum held seminars and convened meetings, consistently praising Pervez Musharraf's programs, predominantly the introduction the system of local government, and called Musharraf the savior of the nation. They also highlighted the corruption of elected governments of Pakistan to support dictator. though, in distinguished divergence, the PPP, JUI_F, PML-N JI, JUP, MQM held separate and combined community meetings and staged many meetings to disapproval alongside, what they called, an illegitimate referendum, looking for to reassure their followers to thwart the Musharraf attempt to seize authority unconstitutionally. A prominent story of Pervez Musharraf's referendum drive was the large number of indefinite individuals who contributed in the drive.

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Posters adorned with positive slogans looked at vantage areas along with many cities and in his rallies. But, obvious sycophancy all the same, the events of unqualified provision carried on, unhampered by any former anti-Musharraf opinions. Many political parties supportive to the presidential referendum could only support the régime in constructing its appearance in the media, but their concrete backing did not aggregate to considerable. Parties like Tehrik-e-Insaaf, Pakistan Millat Party, Pakistan Awami Tehrik and National Awami Party etc. preserved a occurrence in the national press, but none of parties were to be realized assembling voters on the voting day. A group of PML namely Quaid-e-Azam group was the only strong political group of the Musharraf camp that signified to some point as far as the presidential referendum. This political group like PMLQ consist of the old politicians that cast-off to be appreciated and seen around Gen. Zia Ul Haq, Muhammad Khan Junejo and Mian Nawaz Sharif at their crowning. That time they were seen in the Pervez Musharraf favor and had no doubt joined his successors. The persons leading PMLQ had their personal vote bank and ethnic influence that had been a prominent factor, but had always been altering their allegiances with the power wind.

With the support of government machinery they standpoint a good coincidental of winning the elections in coming month of 2002. In contrast, the government was dispossessed of the backing of the regional political parties of Pakistan having vote Bank and street power. Such parties comprised the PPP, PMLN, ANP, MQM, Pushtoonkhwa Milli Awami Party, Pakistan Jamhoori Watan Party and Balochistan National Party (Mengal). However, some parties identical to ANP, MQM and Balochistan National Movement ostensibly opposed Musharraf in

referendum in the national press, but extended their unspoken backing to the régime. Pushtoonkhwa MAP was the only political party that went on a public awareness drive against in the presidential referendum, holding the corner meetings notwithstanding the ban on political events. Some other political parties limited their antagonism to the press, further holding only the public meetings. While the government helped political actions in favor of the presidential referendum, its adversaries repudiated the same right. Musharraf regime sprang his campaign for referendum by drawing unequivocal combat positions between his opposition and himself. He said he had to draw a clear line from that day and understand who was supportive to his reforms and who was against his policies in Pakistan and he also announced at his opening public gathering in Lahore Punjab to which, conferring to reliable accounts, thousands of government sector workers had been compulsorily bussed to listen him.¹⁶

Public money was being used to campaign for Musharraf candidacy on the other side under usual conditions, candidates in the polls bear the campaigning expenditures themselves. It was reasoned that as the régime in this situation was itself holding the presidential referendum, it should be accountable for the expenditures gained in the course. Conferring to rumors, the régime consumed at least one 100 million rupees to arrange dozens of public meetings for Pervez Musharraf across the state. Federal ministry of finance released an exceptional funding of 25 million rupees for all of the province to be castoff for the printing and demonstration of Placards, banners, posters, board hoardings and flags along with other such stuff throughout the rallies of Pervez Musharraf. And this excepts the expenditures, over earned by the central government, which were elaborate in placing advertisements in the countrywide and dialect press and in in a row the poll campaign in the electrical media. A year back in 2001 Election Commission of Pakistan had paid 1.2 billion rupees on the elections of the local bodies, which were held in three different levels all over the state. With a significantly bigger number of voting stations and polling booths in the presidential referendum, this application had been at least double as luxurious as the elections of the local bodies.¹⁷

The Election Commission Pakistan had primarily projected the cost of the presidential referendum at a little done two billion rupees, containing the printing of more than the 70 million ballot papers, payment for the election staff, conveyance of ballot papers, and creation of the polling stations and the polling booths for voters. The administration, still, had to use a considerable amount more for the reason that it had decided to upsurge the number of the polling stations and the polling booths to create it appropriate for people to vote in larger figures. The payments for the election staff in the presidential referendum increased from the two hundred rupees given in earlier elections to four hundred rupees each, plus additional two hundred rupees for lunchtimes. Not together from the cash involvement, the regime also started negotiation with all political parties that guaranteed it of its backing. The mission of holding meetings with several political parties was supposedly allotted to the state's leading intelligence agencies. These

agencies made interaction not only with personalities who have political influence but also those in typical political parties of Pakistan who had venality cases undecided against them and who possibly will therefore be compelled into compliance. Fearing and awaiting arrest, politicians were seen hysterically deliberating the matter with their party coworkers.¹⁸

Their panic intemperate endorsement, publicized their backing to Pervez Musharraf in the presidential referendum, notwithstanding the party's clear verdict to boycott these presidential referendum politicians started to support the Musharraf. The Zilla, Tehsil and Union Council Nazims and local councilors in all 154 districts in Pakistan were directed by the provincial administrations to utilize their own funds for the referendum campaign. Nearly twenty to fifty thousand rupees were given to individually of the Nazims of union councils for the campaign on the behalf of Musharraf. "This has once again invigorated the deep-rooted culture of plunder and looted of the exchequer of people. In some areas of Sindh Nazims were complaining that the amount of twenty thousand rupees given to them for election campaigning was not enough to run presidential campaign for Pervez Musharraf and they should be given minimum of fifty thousand. The protesting Nazims also were demanding the disposal of some of their colleagues or else they would be powerless to bring their voters for vote. Even though the administration had made an effort to increase the turnout of vote on the polling day of the presidential referendum, it persisted, as predictable, low and lacking of the interest typically originated on the election day. There were a number of Polling booths set up in every corner and crook of the state, together with railway stations, prisons, airports, even hotel lobbies, which presented free eating items for the people who approached to cast the votes for referendum."¹⁹

The whole state machinery was utilized to attract the highest number of voters likely. Speciously, the pronouncement not to declare a public holiday on the polling day and it was taken in order to force about 5 million employees of public sector in the state to vote in the presidential referendum. There were also examples in which government employees were directed by their bosses to vote in favor of Pervez Musharraf or otherwise face penalties. Free viewers have testified a congregation of wrongdoings such as unashamed numerous voting and casting of the votes by perceptibly disqualified people. Many people claimed to have casted vote more than one time, numerous cast several votes only for a joke and to realize whether they could escape with it. Those recognizing backing for Pervez Musharraf were permitted to vote more than one time, even if they had no credentials papers. The absence of electoral lists to confuse stuffs and at various polling booths, predominantly was another case, the staffs were not demanding ID. Notwithstanding the absence of data as to the precise number of qualified voters in the wake of the right of vote being prolonged to everybody over the age of eighteen, the Election Commission of Pakistan claimed 71 percent turnout.²⁰

Gen. Muhammad Ayub secured 97.7 per cent votes in his presidential referendum. Gen. Zia-ul-Haq secured an equal number. The loopholes in the way of the polling, estimation of the total at between ten to fifteen per cent. The political parties in

opposition for the time being, claimed 6 percent turnout and called for that Pervez Musharraf interpret this as a decision against him and resigned. There were many motives for the low turnout in the presidential referendum, of 2002, the basic one actualizes the boycott by the majority political parties of Pakistan and even the Mutihida Qaumi Movement (MQM) extracted its backing to the presidential referendum and the overall public's absence of concern in routine governance as additional. Like each administration in the past, the that time government inclined to make tall statements, while the layman almost not profits from any developments. As far as the grassroot level as concerned, the complications of financial side and law enforcement, remote from improving, had sustained to increase multifarious. Circus or if not, the first time of legitimization of Musharraf and his tenure was then over. And if this was a perception of effects to arise, people had started to question the credulity of the upcoming general elections of October 2002.²¹

General Elections October 2002

After the presidential referendum there was angst founded on the constitutional provision that needed Pervez Musharraf to get the forthcoming parliament's decree for the validation of his occupancy as president of Pakistan. This was merely conceivable if he guaranteed that the subsequent general elections of 2002 would coming back a flexible parliament that was ready to perform another fraud. The manners in which the whole state apparatus was bound to make the presidential referendum succeed, the likelihood that the fresh parliament would be elected over and done with free and fair ways appears far-flung. Thus a spoiled electoral procedure would only yield an unbalanced government, such strategies would dash expectations for the nation's democratic in upcoming days as the actual circumstance that had bound Pervez Musharraf to intervene 'unenthusiastically. The two major and prevalent political parties in 2002 were Pakistan Muslim League (N) and Pakistan People's Party, despite the fact that their leadership were in exile. Pervez Musharraf as army chief and President of Pakistan issued a presidential order that banned the politicians in quest of office if they had worked two terms as prime minister of Pakistan or chief minister of a province of Pakistan which excluded Benazir Bhutto, Mian Nawaz Sharif and seven other noticeable politicians including Shabaz Sharif from contesting in the polls in 2002. Number of amendments in the constitution of 1973, which Pervez Musharraf released for the observation of People and wanted accepted, including three other methods confirming that main leadership could not contest the elections.²²

An additional amendment barred anyone who did not have a bachelor degree from contesting the polls - an outrageous provision in a state which had only 40 per cent literacy rate. Such a move was debarring 80 per cent of the former politicians of Pakistan from contesting the elections. One of the amendments had given Pervez Musharraf the authority to sack the country's prime minister and remove his cabinet and set up new decision making body in Pakistan that was called the National Security Council of Pakistan, which was headed by him and under the

control of the army. It was the murder of democratic values and paved the way for dictatorship. There was opposition Alliance of sixteen political parties against his military rule and for the Restoration of Democracy in Pakistan. And this alliance included the two major parties; PPP and PMLN. "The majority of the people was not accepting the Musharraf rule at that time and wished to action of step aside. The Alliance for Restoration of Democracy (ARD) was demanding his resignation and the setting up of an interim government to conduct the elections in 2002.²³

Additional alliance of the six Islamic fundamentalist parties namely MMA also wanted the resignation of Musharraf. Pervez Musharraf on the other hand was trying to reinvent a new political procedure but each measure had extremely failed. As the elections date was coming near, Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) as military agency and the Intelligence Bureau (IB) as civilian agency were involved in an extensive pre-rigging struggle to select the nominees for the elections. The Government officers were discussing in the meetings in every district to select the candidates which were showed in favor of military rule in Pakistan. The intelligence agencies were also selecting candidate of opposition parties just because they wanted to make sure that after the elections results they could manage the parties. Possible candidates from PPP of Benazir Bhutto and PML of Nawaz Sharif were facing the pestering, threats and the cases in the court for suspected non-payment of the tax or utility bills to discourage them from contesting the elections. This was new strategy of Pervez Musharraf which followed the failure to flag together the political alliance in his favor which won the elections and removed the chances of PPP and PMLN returned in Power. Even Pervez Musharraf passed through the electoral course, parliament in its first meeting, all the politicians were probable to request bigger role for themselves, which could have prompted a political crisis in Pakistan.²⁴

Three years after the military revolution, General Pervez Musharraf held the elections on October 10, 2002. More than seventy political parties, contested the general election of 2002, the key political parties were the PPPP (Peoples Party Parliamentarian), PMLN (Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz), MQM (Muttahida Quami Movement), PMLQ (Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid-i-Azam) also known as the "King's Party" for its absolute backing to the military régime of Pervez Musharraf, and MMA (Muttahida Majlis-i-Amal), an alliance of the six religious parties of Pakistan initially led by Maulana Shah Ahmad Noorani. Other well-known political parties contesting the election at the national level comprised the National Alliance of six political party led by former Former President of Pakistan, Farooq Ahmad Lagari, Pakistan Tehrik-i-Insaaf led by Imran Khan and Awami League of Tahir-ul-Qadri's. According to the results of the general elections of 2002, the Pakistan Muslim League (Q) won the highest number of 126 seats, which was called the King's Party. Pakistan People's Party Parliamentarian remained second in number with 81 seats while the Muthida Majlis Ammal took 63 seats. PML-N won 19, MQM won 17 National Alliance won 16 seats. The functional League has won 2 seats, the Muslim League Junjo Group 3 and the PPP's Sher Pao won 2 seats. PTI and six regional parties received success on one

seat each while 3 independent candidates were successful. Regarding the general elections of 2002, European Union observers declared the elections biased. In the report it was stated that State resources had been used to change the results and support the King's parties.²⁵ The total number of voters registered in the 2002 elections was 71866278, out of which 30012407 people used their right to vote while 7,757720 votes were rejected, Turnout in the election remained 41.8 percent. General Lt. Pervez Musharraf-backed PML-Q won the majority seats in the election but not sufficient to form the government on which the Q-League helped by other members separated in the name of patriotic group from PPP and in addition to MQM.²⁶

The government was formed by Mir Zafarullah Jamali who was elected Prime Minister on November 23, 2002. Mr. Zulfiqar Jamali, who took over the power of the government, remained in the Prime Minister's office till June 26, 2004. On November 19, 2002, the PML-Q elected Ameer Hussain speaker of the National Assembly. Two days later, the National Assembly elected Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali as the new prime minister. As a result of the 2002 election, Muslim League-Q formed a provincial government in Punjab, whose chief minister was Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi. PMLQ also succeeded in making the Muslim League (Q) government in Sindh. Earlier, Ali Muhammad was elected Chief Minister. while on 9th June 2004 to 19 November 2007, Arbab Ghulam Rahim was Chief Minister Sindh as change come in center and Mir Zafrullah Khan Jamali resigned from the seat and Shujahat Hussain became care taker prime minister and after him offices was handed over to the Shaukat Aziz. MMA a group of religious parties in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province were able to form a government. Akram Khan Durrani was elected chief minister while PMLQ formed government in Baluchistan and Jam Mohammad Yousuf was elected as Chief Minister of Baluchistan.²⁷

Local Bodies Elections 2005

The Local Bodies Election for 2nd term took place in August to October 2005. The elections were conducted through the ECP (Election Commission of Pakistan) as in the past the local bodies elections used to be held under the provincial election authorities of Pakistan. The Local Bodies Election 2005 was held in three different phases. In the first Phase, elections were held to elect the Nazims and Naib Nazims and councilors of Union Councils in fifty-three Districts of Pakistan on August 18, 2005 in all provinces of Pakistan. In the second Phase, elections held to the seats of, Nazims and Naib Nazims, Councilors of Union Councils in fifty four districts was held on, August 25, 2005 in all provinces of the country. In third Phase, elections held on October 6, 2005 for the following positions; (a) Nazims of Zila (Districts); (b) Nazims of Tehsils, Town/Talkas; (c) Members of Zila Councils and Tehsil/Talka Council or the Town Councils and for the seats reserved for workers, minorities, women and peasants. Some area of Pakistan like; FATA (Federally Administered Tribal Areas); (b) Islamabad Capital Territory and; (c) cantonments persisted out of the range of Local Bodies Election of 2005. There were some constitutional and administrative problems to hold elections in these areas.²⁸

Like Local Bodies Elections 2001, in the local bodies elections of 2005 there was no formal involvement of political parties of Pakistan. Though, in actuality, involvement of political parties was very enthusiastic and practically open. Total number of registered voters in total were 61.90 million for the local bodies election of 2005. In the 110 districts of Pakistan elections held in 6048 union councils in the Local Bodies Election of 2005. Total number of seats in 2005 elections were 79703 and 222783 candidates were contesting on the seats 7310 won unopposed in the elections 3283 remained vacant where no election contested. Per seat candidates in 2005 elections were 2.8 in the 2005 local government elections and 9.2 percent remained unopposed and 4.1 percent remained vacant. In the district Nazim elections on 109 seat 673 candidates were contesting the elections. The turnout in the elections fell lowest in Pervez Musharraf era to 41.68²⁹

Response of the political parties

Though the Local Bodies Election 2005 was on non-party basis, officially the political parties were barred to participate but the parties were enthusiastically involved in the local bodies elections at every phase from selecting of the candidates to campaigning for the elections and voting. After the polls all political parties have also articulated their opinions to the ways of the process of election. The ruling parties Pakistan Muslim League Q and Muthida Quami Movement described the local bodies elections of 2005 as an unpretentious democratic application which was going to strengthen participating authority and the central cabinet of Pakistan pronounced these local bodies elections as free, fair up to ninety percent and transparent as only ten per cent complaints were received about irregularities. The important opposition political parties were doubtful about these statements and suspected the régime of using its power and means to incline the balance in its own favor and supported the candidates of Pakistan Muslim League Q. Two main political parties; PPP-P and PML-N who were part of the ARD (Alliance for Restoration of Democracy), declared that outstanding to a partial conduct of the Local Bodies Elections in 2005 and announced that they would not participate in the upcoming general elections under President Pervez Musharraf. They also called for elections to be held under the supervision of the UNO. Similarly, the leadership of MMA find guilty administration for rigging in the local bodies election and supposed free and fair elections could not be possible under Musharraf. The opposition parties also call for resignation of the elected government of 2002 for rigging the Local Bodies Election of 2005.³⁰

Analytical overview

Political Families

During the 2001 LG elections, Referendum, General elections of 2002 and again LG elections of 2005 the pro military regime candidates won the seats. The question of impartiality and transparency in these elections course can hypothetically be elevated as very few candidates could secure their constituencies

if they belonged to opposition parties like PPP and PMLN. The situation started to improve after the 2002 general elections and during LG elections of 2005. The position of the political parties remained intact as the stalwart political families in Pakistan had more influence than the political parties such as Sardar, Kharal, Chaudary, Bhatti, Leghari, Mazari Chatta, Mengal, Marri, Bugati, Syed, Makhdoom, Kanju, Rind, Nawab, Malik, Arbab, Kundi, Khatak and others. When political parties returned to politics all these families joined them and in the absence of political parties maintained their influence in their constituencies.³¹

Low Turnout

The voter's turnout was miserably low in the elections as people showed no interests in majority and rejected the system. Some participants labeled it as the lowest voter turnout in elections' history of Pakistan. People usually stayed in their households and categorically not to use the right to votes. Furthermore, most of the districts had average turnout remained between 20 to 25 percent conflicting to the statement of the military régime that the voter's turnout was between 35 to 40 percent. Specifically, female's voters chose to stay at their homes and in this regard the lowest voter's turnout in Sindh. The main cause of the lowest voter turnout was due to lack of awareness about the system and of the importance of right of vote. In many constituencies of the Sindh, contenders not ever tried to carry the women voters. The overall women voter's turnout was observed principally lowest in KPK province of Pakistan. Maximum number of the people believed that they not ever trust in the exercise of the elections. They labeled it as a fake exercise in the meantime the régime had a selection of the winning nominees. Voters Turnout Rate was key factor to indicate the trust of people in the electoral process under the military regime of Musharraf in the turnout in Punjab in LG elections of 2001 was 53.56 percent, in general elections of 2002 was 58.64 percent and in LG elections of 2005 was 46.00 percent. Looking into the Sindh turnout in LG elections of 2001 was 37.67 percent, in general elections of 2002 was 41.61 percent and in LG elections of 2005 was 38.17 and in KPK the turnout in LG elections of 2001 was 41.29 percent, in general elections of 2002 was 44.37 percent and in LG elections of 2005 was 35.00 and turnout in Balochistan in the LG elections of 2001 was 31.14 percent, in general elections of 2002 was 33.06 percent and in LG elections of 2005 was 29.67. Looking over all turnout in Pakistan in the LG elections of 2001 was 47.50 percent, in general elections of 2002 was 52.31 percent and in LG elections of 2005 was 41.68. These facts indicate that people participation in 2001 was in wake of hope of return of democracy in Pakistan and approval of what was propagating by the military regime after assuming power and devolution plan of Musharraf overcome the rigging and interference of regime in 2001 LG elections and 2002 presidential referendum and they again come out to cast their vote in 2002 general elections with the hope of a return to parliamentary form of government in Pakistan but the rigging and interference of the regime to change the results, caused despair and the

hopes of the people of Pakistan and in the LG elections of 2005 turn out went down again.³²

Untrained and Unequipped Polling Staff

The polling staff in the elections were not appropriately qualified which affected troublesomeness for the people coming to vote. The elections staff required appropriate information about the procedure and principles of the voting before the elections. In several polling stations, staff were incapable to offer direction to the people coming to cast their votes. Principally, females and elders in the country side areas could not get appropriate help that caused into the misuse of their unawareness and at a lot of polling stations, the polling agents of the significant political parties efficaciously misguided the people coming to vote and burglary the votes of the people for their favored contenders. The polling staff in the elections was short of vital elements required for the voting process, such as ballot boxes, stamp paper, ballot papers and stamps along with indelible ink. Occasionally copies required serial numbers and at times even the electoral symbols of the candidates were missing. These inconsistencies caused adjournment in the start of the voting course.³³

Flawed Electoral Lists and Election Schemes

The mainstream problems were troublesomeness to the voters instigated by faulty electoral lists arranged by NADRA which disheartened people from working out their right to vote. The voters, all over the state was going back to their homes deprived of casting their votes for the reason that they could not find out their name in voting lists. It was interpreted as a planned scheme of the régime. The over-all impression amongst workers of the parties and people coming to vote was that the régime sought unfilled lists to be filled far along on by the bogus ID cards numbers. There were gossips that the régime has conventional fake polling station in the particular constituencies to change the results.

Acts of Violence

There were few acts of forcefulness and robbery of ballot boxes during the elections process. In many cases, violence resulted in fatalities. Frequently, the local police remained unconnected during such issues. happenings of violence and gunfire were perceived through the political division. The most fascinating feature was the insignificance of the police presence and the role of other law enforcing agencies of Pakistan deployed for the elections. typical, there were numerous occasions informed where females were not permitted to vote. Such happenings were principally from diverse parts of KPM, Punjab and Balochistan. In many constituencies, contenders and influence agents through the political division decided to stop over females from exercising the right of vote and that portrayed the letdown of the administration which had been appealing to take along females in the political vanilla of the country. Moreover, in many number of

polling stations females staff was not contemporary which bound females to go to the stations to cast their vote.³⁴

The voting patterns of minorities:

The non-Muslims voters were participating equally in the electoral process excluding the Ahmadia community in Pakistan who remained in boycott of the first elections of local bodies in line for their separate lists of electoral and affirmation for the faith on “Khatam-e-Nabuwat” that was made for them. In case of Hindu and Christian minorities, some thought-provoking and hopeful signs were appreciated during and before of the elections. The mainstream of the minority had a vote and the political workers in different political parties actively took part in the polls. They were pleased and appreciated for the reason that each candidate of every political party approached to them and requested for their votes. Hindu and Christians fondled themselves as an equal and the respected citizens of state. The votes of the minorities were divided in such a manner that none of the political parties could make claim that it got principal portion of votes of the minorities. PML(N), PML(Q), PPP (SB), NA, PPP, MQM, ANP, JUP, PTI and SDA all political parties of Pakistan got their votes. PAT of Tahir ul Qadri won a seat due to the large aggregate of minorities, votes. Although in many areas Christians voted for the religious party MMA.³⁵

Conclusion

General Pervez Musharraf on 12 October, 1999, took over the country from Nawaz Sharif in military coup when he attempted to replace him by another General Ziauddin Butt. Unfortunately, the senior generals of Pakistan army refused to accept the political decision of an elected government. Gen. Pervez Musharraf took over in military coup and controlled the government by arresting Nawaz Sharif and his cabinet on different kind of charges including the corruption and defaming the democracy. He announced that he was going to introduce the pure democracy in Pakistan that would not be corrupt and after the process of accountability the power would be handed over to people of Pakistan. He introduced many rules and regulations and ordinances to meet his pledge.³⁶ He took refuge under the supreme court order as he had dismissed the parliament and suspended the constitution of Pakistan. Supreme court of Pakistan provided him legal grounds and also ordered him to hold the general election in 2002. Musharraf after seeking legitimacy from the Supreme court of Pakistan felt the need of legitimacy from people of Pakistan. In search of public legitimacy, he introduced the local bodies government by implementing the LG ordinance and holding elections. Further to legitimize his rule and pledge its extension after the imminent elections, Pervez Musharraf held a divisive referendum on April 30, 2002. which prolonged his term in office for five years after the elections. Musharraf had already strengthened his office by issuing the Legal Framework Order in the August 2001 which recognized the constitutional grounds for his office. According to the orders of

supreme court the general elections of 2002 held in October same years and pro-Musharraf political party PML-Q won a majority in the Parliament.³⁷ However, the political parties against to the Legal Framework Order efficiently paralyzed the parliament. Pervez Musharraf struck a deal with opposition parties and strengthened his position. He praised his local bodies system and empowered the representative of local government to black mail the parliament. He projected the LG as alternate to the parliamentary democracy and hold local bodies elections in 2005 and continuously held the conventions of representatives of LG system to give message to the parties. The two local bodies elections created a new political leadership that in many parts of Pakistan replaced the old stalwarts of political parties as he provided plenty of development funds to the representatives of LG. In his uniform Pervez Musharraf always felt the need of public support and he acted accordingly and utilized the electoral politics in his favor over the years.

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