

JEOPARDIZING DEMOCRACY IN PAKISTAN: THE POLITICAL CONFLICT OF 1977

Abid Hussain Abbasi

Assistant Professor

Department of Pakistan Studies & History
National University of Modern Languages Islamabad
abid.abbasi@numl.edu.pk

ABSTRACT

The class-conscious populist movement against Ayub Khan paved the way for the rise of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto with a chanted agenda of egalitarian reforms. A process of democratization and representative institutionalization was started. This process of change was soon derailed on 5th July 1977. General Ziaul Haq toppled the first ever popularly elected government of Pakistan by imposing a rigorous Martial Law and remained in power till 1988. Role of opposition in 1977 against Bhutto, election 1977, its aftermath, jeopardizing the very foundations of newly established democracy, Pakistan National Alliance's (PNA) arduous protest movement against alleged rigging in elections, demand for Nizam-i-Mustafa is focused in this study. This paper also discusses opposition's talks with the Bhutto regime and the introduction of Martial Law by the military under General Zia nevertheless an agreement reached between the PNA and the government. The aftermath of PNA-PPP conflict resulted in jeopardizing the already fragile democratic process in the country and a strong democratic dispensation never returned in the country.

Keywords: Opposition, negotiation, agitation, meetings, dialogues, allegations, agreement elections, Martial Law

INTRODUCTION

According to the rules the tenure of Bhutto regime could last till 1978 but he decided to hold elections earlier perceiving his popularity and fragmentations in the opposition ranks. The national assembly gave three years extension to Chief Election commissioner Justice Sajjad Ahemad Jan, opposition rejected this extension calling it against the rules, that assembly could give only year extension.

12th of January, just four days of the announcement of the elections by Bhutto, opposition formed an alliance and announced in a press conference. While talking to press Asghar Khan told that the alliance would choose a joint election symbol of "plough". Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan, Professor Ghafoor Ahmad, Malik Nazir Ahmad and Rafiq Ahmad Bajwa were part of a committee created to decide on the alliance's offices and other issues. Mufti Mahmood of the JUI was chosen as President of the alliance on January 16. Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan of the JUP was appointed Vice President, and Rafiq Bajawa of the JUP was appointed Secretary General. (Manzooruddin Ahmed, 1980)

The Pakistan National Alliance was consisted of: Jamaat-i-Islami, The Jamiat-i-Ulama-i-Islam, The Jamiat-i-Ulama-i-Pakistan, The Tehrik-i-Istiqlal, The Pakistan Muslim League, The Pakistan Democratic Party, The National Democratic Party, The Khaksar Tehrik, and the Azad Kashmir Muslim Conference. Initially Asghar Khan was reluctant to join an opposition alliance as he considered himself more popular than any other leader in opposition ranks and could give a tough contest to ruling party. But later, he joined the position alliance which was formed with the support of "behind the curtain" forces.

The agencies reported to Bhutto that there were severe rifts among opposition and was quite difficult to forge an alliance of opposition parties. Bhutto gave task to agencies to create differences among them, but an opposition alliance, PNA came into being, a failure of his agencies. (Wynbrandt, 2005) During his years in power Bhutto regime used highhandedness against opposition, two governors, two provincial chief ministers, belonged to opposition parties and forty-four members of National and Provincial Assemblies were put into prisons which created severe animosity and bitterness in the minds of opposition leaders against Bhutto.

Research Question/Objective:

1. How has the process of democratization started with class-conscious popular movement ended with the rise of PNA?
2. How far the negative consequences of the 1977 movement for the institution of democracy in Pakistan?

Significant of the Study: The study is significant as during this conflict the process of democratization was toppled and has never returned in true spirit of democracy. The country has been run by direct military orders or "controlled democracy," with critical decisions not being made by elected civilian governments.

METHODOLOGY

The research is analytical in nature and based on inductive and deductive methods. Significantly both the primary and secondary sources have been used in the study.

Formation of Alliance: The common bias against Bhutto paved the way for opposition parties to forge an alliance against him. (Amin, Coup D'état in Pakistan., 2007) After the allegation of rigging, a strong movement was launched by PNA across the country, especially in the big urban centers like Karachi, Lahore, Hyderabad, Rawalpindi and others. With the Saudi intervention both the parties started negotiation but with every passing time the demands and strategy of the movement was changing. When Bhutto accepted on set of demands the opposition enhanced the demands. Finally, an agreement was reached between government and opposition but before formally signing the agreement military under general Zia U Haq carried out a Coup d'état and toppled the elected government and imposed martial law in the country.

The class interests also contributed to form PNA component parties were representing various economic classes, especially those affected by the egalitarian reforms of Bhutto regime. JI and Muslim League represented the small and middle capitalist classes, traders and business classes, JUP and TI represented big merchants and traders of big cities, TI had also close contacts with civil-military bureaucracy. These classes also played their role in formation and function of PNA movement. On the other hand NAP having left leaning was against the big feudal classes of Sindh and Punjab, big landed gentry of Baluchistan, petty bourgeoisies and had its support among middle classes. (Sayeed, 1980) From PPP's perspective, and even for some impartial analysts, the American CIA also contributed in the formation and role of PNA to topple Bhutto's government. (Mushahid Hussain, 1993).

17th January was the date for the allocation of election symbol, PPP's council Hafeez Pirzada's plea that PNA was not a party but alliance of various parties and could not be entitled to have one election symbol, was rejected by EC and allotted the election symbol of plough to PNA. By securing a joint election symbol PNA succeeded to create an impression of being an alternative to Bhutto to muster the support of masses. (Arora, 1997)

Unopposed Elections creates Suspicions: EC set 19th January as last date for the submission of nomination papers for National assemblies and 22th January for Provincial Assemblies. No candidate could file papers from Larrkana constituency against Bhutto till 19th January, consequently next day Bhutto was declared unopposed by EC. While addressing to press conference Mufti Mehmood president of PNA told that the opposition candidate from Larrkana constituency was kidnapped by police and kept in confinement to get Bhutto elected unopposed. The bureaucracy around Bhutto, his election team, Khalid Khari DC Larrkan, Muhammad Khan Junejo home secretary Sindh and others made the plan to kidnap Maulana Jan Muhammad Abbasi to develop a psychological image of Bhutto among voters while getting him elected him unopposed.

Jubilating supporters of PPP did not know that how would it be disastrous the large scale unopposed election of PPP stalwarts and the means they used to get it all.

Following the instance of Bhutto 19 other PPP leaders including Makhdoom Talibul Mula, Bhutto's cousin Mumtaz Bhutto, Liaqat Jatoi, CM Sindh Mustafa Jatoi's brother Ghulam Mujataba Jatoi, Syed Bashir Ahmad Shah, Haji Najmuddin Khan Leghari, Malik Sikandar Khan and others got elected unopposed. The unopposed election of 22 candidates including Bhutto himself created suspicions about the transparency of the elections (Jillani., 1991).

Following the example of national assembly the same practice was carried out in provincial assemblies elections where 26 candidates of Sindh assembly and 22 candidates of Baluchistan assembly and all four incumbent chief ministers, CM Punjab Sadiq Hussain Qureshi, CM Sindh Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi, CM Baluchistan Mohammad Khan Barozai and CM KPK Chief Minister Nasrullah Khattak also declared elected unopposed. Though opposition boycotted the provincial assemblies' elections but large scale unopposed elections of PPP candidates created qualms about the transparency of the whole election process. (Kumar, 1978)

This later proved a decisive blunder of PPP stalwarts to eclipse the transparency of elections and provided a stage to opposition to launch a rigorous movement. No impartial analysts or organization could digest and believe such heavy number of unopposed elections of government candidates.

The Elections: The elections held on total 200 seats in the National Assembly and 460 seats in provincial Assemblies including Punjab 115 NA, 240 PA; Sindh 43 NA, 100 PA; KP (NWFP) 26 NA, 80 PA; Baluchistan 7 NA, 40 PA, Federally Administered Tribal Areas (Fata) 8 NA, Federal Capital 1 NA. When election results were formally announced PPP secured 155 seats, PNA could win only 36 seats. PPP secured 107 out of total 115 seats in Punjab, 07 seats in KPK, 32 in Sindh and all 07 seats of Baluchistan. PNA won only 08 seats in Punjab, 15 in KPK, and 11 in Sindh, mostly from city of Karachi. As an act of protest an ongoing military operation in Baluchistan, PNA boycotted the election. PPP secured 10 million votes about 59% of the total casted votes and PNA secured about 06 million which was about 36% of the total polled votes. Only 08 independent candidates, all from FATA won the elections and one seat was secured by Muslim Leagues (Q). In the outgoing national assembly PPP had a majority with 109 seats, NAP 20, independent 20, League (Q) 08, JUI 06, JUP 02, and JI only 3seats. (Burki, 1986)

As a protest PNA boycotted the provincial assemblies' elections scheduled on 10th March. Though Bhutto made assurances of maintaining law and ordinance, but the turnout of the voters was low as compared to 7th March National assembly's election. PPP secured heavy number of seats; some seats were won by independent candidates. Bhutto showed his concerns over the unexpected results particularly in Punjab and inquired from his political advisor Rafi Raza about the overwhelming victory of PPP in Punjab. Round mid of the election night he called deputy commissioners in many districts of Punjab directly to inquire the situation there and asked them, "did I not tell you to be impartial and fair". He also called Director General Inter-Services Intelligence (DG ISI) and Director Intelligence Bureau (IB) about the happenings in the election results (Raza., 1998).

On 11th March PNA observed a countrywide protest against the alleged rigging in the elections and called the elections of National assembly a "fraud". PNA workers violated the Section 144 of Emergency and PNA alleged that a dozen of workers was killed by police and more than one hundred workers were arrested.

Getting encouraged by successful agitating of 11th March PNA presented a harsh set of demands, while addressing to a press conference at Lahore on 12th March Mufti Mehmood president PNA demanded the annulment of the elections, holding new elections, removal of chief election commissioner and resignation of PM Bhutto. (Khan M. A., 2008)

On 12th March Bhutto addressed the Nation on TV and Radio and called the 7th March election results a settled issue but showed his willingness to hold meaningful negotiations with PNA. (Dawn, 1977)

Direct Correspondence Starts: In perusal of his offers of talks Bhutto wrote a letter to Mufti Mehmood reiterated his offer of talks.¹ PNA discussed Bhutto's letter in its Peshawar meeting and replied on 14th March and said that unless the terms of the dialogues were not clear PNA would not enter into any dialogues with the government party. Initially PNA levied allegations of rigging in 21 constituencies of National assembly but later on declared the whole election a "fraud" and demanded new elections under an impartial administration but Bhutto. (Naji, Daily Dunya , 2014) On 14th March ISI in its comprehensive report suggested that elections were rigged in 33 constituencies and proposed new elections but government did not give much consideration to the suggestion (Trimizi, 1995).

Bhutto replied to Mufti Mehmood's letter on very next day 15th March, showing his intention to settled matters through dialogues and assured to resume dialogue with the ambit of the constitution of the country. Mufti Mehmood sent a copy of his letter to President Fazal Elahi Chaudri which he earlier wrote

to Bhutto on 24th March and appealed to President to fulfill his constitutional duty regarding the charges of rigging in the elections, the letter further envisaged:

“... the only constitutional course in such critical circumstances is for the head of state, who is the ultimate constitutional authority that has the inherent power to act in such an emergency, to order fresh elections to the National and Provincial Assemblies under an administration and through a machinery that ensures that these elections are ‘conducted honestly, justly, fairly and in accordance with law and that corrupt practices are guarded against’, as prescribed in the Constitution. Mr Bhutto and his cabinet have demonstrated by the abuse of their official power that they cannot be trusted any longer with the executive authority of the state. The present Election Commission has also shown itself to be incapable of discharging the responsibility given to it under the Constitution.” (Ahemad A. G., 1988)

Quite interestingly the copy of the letter reached to the press even before reaching to the President. Just one day before the start of the first session of newly elected national assembly Bhutto turned intolerant and arrested almost all the central leaders of opposition including Mufti Mahmood, Maulana Shah Ahmad Noorani, Syed Munawar Hassan, Begum Nasim Wali Khan, Mian Tufail Ahmad, Sardar Sherbaz Mazari, Mir Rasool Bakhsh Talpur, Mian Mohammad Shaukat, Prof Shah Faridul Haq, Malik Mohammad Qasim, Haji Hanif Tayab and many other second tier leaders (Kaushik, 1995).

153 elected members of PPP and 8 from FATA took oath in the first session of assembly on 26th March, Malik Miraj Khalid was elected speaker of the assembly. Bhutto in his speech declared the elections of 7th March as free and fair and offered negotiations to PNA. (Dawn, 1977)

Formation of New Government: Bhutto got elected as PM for new five years term on 28th March in the second session of assembly where only 168 treasury benches members were present as opposition boycotted the session. In his speech he offered once again the dialogues to opposition, announced the release of political prisoners arrested during agitation, lifted emergency and decisions of election related petitions within three months. He also assured to bring laws in conformity with the teachings of Islam, in an attempt to defuse the political tension caused by the agitation of opposition. The inaugural session of Sindh assembly held on 30th March, Baluchistan assembly on 3rd April and KPK assembly met on 6th April. On 30th March a 21-member federal cabinet took oath in a chanted atmosphere which reflected that government was paying no heed to the opposition concerns (Pakistan Affairs, volume 30-32., 1977). On 9th April the inaugural session of Punjab assembly started the opposition held agitation rallies all over the country as a protest. Government called FSF and army to support the police. According to governmental sources seven people were killed in scuffles with police and skirmishes of PNA and PPP workers, and 78 injured whereas PNA claimed that 38 were killed and more than hundred were injured in result of the firing of state agencies. (Arif K. M., 1995)

On 8th April Bhutto address a press conference at Karachi invited opposition for dialogue but refused to accept the demands of opposition:

“It would amount to conceding their (the PNA’s) false charge that I am a manipulator and rigger of elections. I do not want to go down in history as a rigger of elections which I am not. If I had rigged elections, I would have said that I have committed a great crime, and let history give its verdict. What the hell is the office of the Prime Minister? I am more concerned about my place in history.” (Hussain S. S., Ayub, Bhutto, and Zia: How They Fell Victim to Their Own Plans , 2000)

After Lahore sad incident PNA adopted a ‘popular slogan’ of implementation of Nizam-i-Mustafa (the system of the Prophet SAW). Killing of protesters and slogan of Nizam-i-Mustafa Bhutto was perturbed, his close comrades in party, specially Maulana Kausar niazi advised him to announce some Islamic provision. But for him there would be no difference of PPP and JI of Maulana Maudoodi’s point of view on the outlook of the state. He did not want to create a psychological impression of a weak man in the eyes of opposition by conceding to their “unjustified” demands, and once he accepted the set of demands there would be no end and according to him it was better to quit than deviating from the path for which he was chosen by the poor masses. (Raza, 1998) On 11th April a complete strike was observed all over the

country, the opposition movement was getting more rigorous appealing to the people not to pay any kind of taxes to “unconstitutional” government. (Surendra Nath, 1995) Bhutto smelled a conspiracy in Lahore killing incident as he believed that civil administration was violating its jurisdiction perhaps behest of some other “force”. He prolonged his stay at Lahore with his close aids to monitor the situation, some stalwarts in party were of the view that situation was getting out of control. (Raza, 1998) On 13th April Bhutto sent an offer to Sherbaz Khan Mazari, who was confined in Sukhar jail, to form government in KPK and Baluchistan by dissociating his party from religious right-wing led PNA, which he declined. The offer was sent through renewed scholar and editor of newspaper Mazhar Ali and his wife Tahira Mazhar Ali. (Raza, 1998)

Resignations of PPP’s Leaders: PPP’s general secretary Dr. Mubashar Hassan resigned on April 13th because to disagreements with the strategy of addressing governance issues, diversion from the Party's core doctrine, particularly the role of the FSF, reliance on bureaucracy and intelligence agencies. Bhutto refused to accept the resignation and summoned Mubashar to a meeting on April 14th. Mubashar openly denounced the ministers' policies and the involvement of their corrupt associates (Political Chronology of Central, 2003). Fourteen other members of National, Punjab and Sindh assemblies resigned from assembly and party as protest against Bhutto’s policies of dealing with opposition. Sardar Shaukat Hayat, Mohammad Ashraf Choudhry, Abdul Hafeez Kardar and eleven others were among those who resigned. Government version was that these members were expelled from party on the charges of violation of party discipline (Pakistan Horizon, 1977). General ® Gul Hassan and Air Marshal ®Rahim Khan were appointed as Ambassador to Spain and Greece after their forced resignation as Army and Air Chiefs in early years of Bhutto government. They resigned from their ambassadorial portfolios and joined PNA protest in a dramatic manner (Arif, 1995). Bhutto prolonged his stay in Lahore to monitor the ever-increasing tense political situation and assigned the responsibility to Hafeez Pirzada to keep a keen eye on the intentions and activities of the military generals. Hafeez reported him that there was no chance of military intervention, later on the imposition of Martial Law on 5th July proved him outrageously wrong. After meeting with Saudi Ambassador Riaz-ul Khateeb along with Foreign Minister Aziz Ahmad, Bhutto travelled to Saudi Arabia to meet with Saudi King Khalid. When it came to convincing the opposition leader to engage in conversation with Bhutto, the Saudi ambassador played a key part in this.

Asghar Khan’s Letter to military Officers: A prominent member of the PNA) and former Air Chief Asghar Khan wrote a letter to the high ranking officials of the armed forces saying that the government's directives are "illegal" and “unconstitutional”, and asked top army officers not to follow them. According to the government, sending a letter of incitement to army officers was violation of both the constitution as well as military oaths. (Chitkara., 1996) Bhutto government imposed censorship and protest photos and any other material that could incite disturbances in the country were prohibited. (Majumdar, 1998) After a rigorous protest demonstration in big cities government imposed martial law in three cities including Karachi, Lahore and Hyderabad on 21st April, later on 2nd June Lahore High Court declared the martial law unconstitutional. After resumption of direct talks with opposition Bhutto lifted martial law on 7th June. (Kapur, 2006)

There were no opposition members in the joint session of Senate and National Assembly on the 28th of April, and only PPP elected members were in attendance. Bhutto spoke passionately and dramatically for almost 90 minutes. He lauded clearly the intervention of foreign forces against him and accused the United States of fostering movement to oust him from power. Pointing US as an "elephant" with a sharp recall, he described the events in a self-proclaimed manner, according to him which irritated US. According to him, the United States was unhappy with his policies towards Vietnam and the Islamic world, and he expressed this to the assembly. (Sherwani, 1980) Bhutto vehemently criticized the US and related a number of tactics of PNA with the alleged secret support of US. He said that he was a son of desert and will counter every conspiracy of the superpower. US responded quickly, and Secretary of State Cyrus Vance wrote a letter to Bhutto urging him to negotiate his grievances objectively with US authorities on a ministerial level instead of accusing the US in the Assembly of the. He offered the talks in Paris. Foreign minister Aziz A. Khan flew to Paris for direct talks with US secretary but the later rejected all allegations and offered Pakistan to start new era of bilateral relations. (Amin, 1977 Coup D’état in Pakistan,

2007) Earlier on 19th April Bhutto came out in an open jeep at crowded Raja Bazar of Rawalpindi and read a letter from Cyrus Vance, which, according to him was a clear threat to him for not compliance of stopping the nuclear program. When Aziz Ahmad was staying in a Paris hotel, his room was broken into, and documents were stolen to wash away the alleged proofs (Niyāzī, 1991).

Arab Facilitation for Negotiations: Concerned about the deteriorating situation, the foreign ministers of Libya and the United Arab Emirates, Khalifa Al Suwaidi, and Saudi Arabia's Sheikh Riaz-ul-Khateeb, reached out to the Pakistani government by the end of April and offered their assistance in resolving the crisis. Riaz-ul-Khateeb met with Bhutto and discussed the issue in great detail with him. Assuring him that things were improving, Bhutto thanked King Khalid of Saudi Arabia for taking an interest in the matter.ⁱⁱ After a brief visit to Saudi Arabia the ambassador Riaz met Bhutto and opposition leaders confined at Sihala rest house. Along with Libyan foreign minister continued efforts to bring both the sides on negotiation table. Bhutto himself met Mufti Mehmood at Rawalpindi CMH where the later was admitted. On 2nd of May Bhutto and Mufti Mehmood at PM House and Bhutto gave assurances of implementation of agreement, if took place, and also offered him that some Arab countries' leaders would be granters of the proposed agreement. In these meetings Mufti Mehmood remained struck to the resignation of Bhutto and holding of fresh elections by an impartial administration. A fifteen-pages charter of demands was formulated and PNA formed a body of eminent lawyers of the country to legally analyse the proposals of Bhutto. Mahmood Ali Kasuri, S. M. Zafar, Zahoorul Haq, Khalid Ishaq, and others were among the lawyers (Hussain S. S., Ayub, Bhutto and Zia: How they Fell Victim of their own Plans, 2000).

On 3rd May the PNA, after a long consultation, presented a hardnosed charter of demands, comprising of 30 clauses and a number of sub-clauses, for the start of negotiation with the government. The document stated that the elections of March 1977 were "fraud" with the nation and "rigged" massively in favour of ruling party. The charter of demands included resignation of PM Bhutto, desolation of national and provincial assemblies, release of all political prisoners, and even the cases registered against political workers after 1st January 1972 be reversed, reversal of all constitutional amendments and some administrative steps of the government, formation of an extraordinary Council of Implementation with the powers of President and federal government till the formation of new elected government. The Council would comprise of government and opposition members and guarantee of holding of free and transparent elections of national and provincial assemblies by 7th and 10th October respectively, withdrawal of military from Baluchistan, holding new elections in Azad Kashmir. After signing the agreement PM would not be able to take any decision and had to take permission from the Council of Implementation for any administrative decision. The Saudi leadership urged to PNA to ease some of their demands and to be so rigid in this regard. The opposition struggle was started with the allegation of rigging on a small number of seats reached to enormous level that PNA keep on putting on pressure on Bhutto government with their ever-increasing demands and finally military managed, with the support of other "forces" overthrew Bhutto from power and consequently hanged him physically. Initially the PNA alleged that 22 seats of assembly were rigged, and their results must be declared null and wide and fresh elections be carried out on those seats. According to almost every impartial analysis, prior to election, it was quite obvious that Bhutto would return successful in the election. Now PNA presented a long and implementable list of demands equal to toppling the whole system. Asghar Khan and some other hawks in the opposition were quite instrumental to prepare such unacceptable charter of demand to put the government in an unsolvable trouble (Naji, Dunya Newspaper, 2014).

The Saudi ambassador continued his efforts to facilitate both the parties to reach an agreement. Bhutto requested Sardar Abdul Qayum Khan the leader of Azad Kashmir Muslim Conference to help assemble all the opposition leaders at Sihala near Islamabad so that the negotiations could be continued easily. The leaders of PNA were confined in various jails of the country. Sardar Qayum was facilitated by government, and he brought the leaders at Sihala. Bhutto met PNA leaders at Sihala. On 12th May Mufti Mehmood wrote another letter to Bhutto and criticized his actions and refused to continue talks with Bhutto. Bhutto was optimistic of the efforts of the brethren Muslim countries for the resumption of talks, but PNA was struck with their most rigid demand of resignation of Bhutto from day one. (Ahemad, 1988) Protest demonstration continued during this period and hundreds of innocent people were killed in those protests.

On 13th May while addressing to National Assembly Bhutto announced to hold a referendum to get the will of the people and assured that if people of Pakistan gave decision against him, he will honour the decision. He said that in such polarized atmosphere in the country fresh elections would add further bloodshed. He severely criticized the role of Asghar Khan specially writing letter to armed forces. On the same day he met with the top brass of civil and military leaders, General Iqbal, General Arbab Jahanzeb and Chief of Army Staff General Ziaul Haq Law Minister Abdul Hafeez Pirzada, Maulana Kausar Niazi and other cabinet ministers were among the participants of the meeting. General Zia supported the idea of referendum. (Niazi, Bhutto, 1995).

PNA outrightly rejected the idea of referendum. On very next day all leaders who were assembled at Sihala just a few days back, were again shifted to various jails all over the country, except Mufti Mehmood was kept at Shala. Pir Pagara was also house arrested at his house in Rawalpindi.ⁱⁱⁱ Russian ambassador Sarwar Azimove met Bhutto on 13th May and encouraged him not to step down and showed his support on the resentment of Bhutto on his apprehension of American interference against his government and US ambassador Byroade's assessment of elections that Bhutto would secure only 40% seats. Azimove also persuaded Bhutto not to participate in CENTO's ministerial conference. (Wolpert, 1993)

On 16th May national assembly passed a bill to hold referendum, as there was no provision in the constitution about holding a referendum. On the same evening President Fazal Elahi Chaudri rectified the bill. It was 7th Constitutional amendment enabling Prime Minister to hold a referendum to get the opinion of the people (Khan H. , 2020).

Deadlock in negotiations continued but the brethren countries like Saudi Arabia, UAE, Kuwait, Libya and others continued their efforts for the resumption of talks.^{iv}

Bhutto appointed General Ziaul Haq as army chief by superseding eight senior generals and ignoring the advice of the outgoing chief, thinking that Zia had no political ambitions. When the crisis was so severe Bhutto used to have meetings with General Zia and sharing his plans with him. General Zia being a very cunning person on one side won the confidence of Bhutto by his gesture but at the same time discussed each and every thing with generals in GHQ while returning from PM house. In a meeting General Zia suggested Bhutto that he (Bhutto) should take into confidence the senior army officials including corps commanders to minimize the chances of any military coup, Bhutto took it as a polite threat of military intervention (Arif, 1995).

Consultation with Military Top Brass: On 16th May Bhutto chaired an important meeting of senior generals, attended by General Zia, General Arbab Jahanzeb Corp Commander Sindh, General Iqbal Corp Commander Lahore, General Sarwar Khan Peshawar, director military intelligence and other army officials. These frequently held meetings with military generals showed that how the hitherto powerful Prime Minister Bhutto got depended on generals for the solution of a political crisis. Generals blatantly showed their dissatisfaction on the handling of political crises and defamation of army among people for being involved in political crises. General Jahanzeb Corp Commander Sindh arrogantly dismissed the idea of referendum announced by PM and for which a constitutional amendment was carried out. He said that if the elections were "rigged" then referendum would also be rigged. In a way he was validating the opposition's allegation of rigging just in front of the PM Bhutto. General Jahanzeb also stressed that military should intervene for an agreement between government and opposition, though it would be a sheer violation of constitution. Corp Commander Peshawar General Sarwar Khan stressed that the only solution of the crisis was the fresh elections. Corp Commander Lahore told the meeting so proudly that he asked his men not to open any fire on our "own" people. General Faiz Ali Chishti Corp Commander Rawalpindi, whom General Zia called *murshid* (mentor) and later who executed the imposition of martial law under General Zia, clearly mentioned that people of Pakistan wished from army to hold fresh elections and get the nation out of the deadlock. (Hussain, 2000) This shows that how much Bhutto lose the grip on power, once Bhutto removed the army and air force chiefs with one stroke of pen and sent them forcibly by literary arresting them and sent them as ambassadors and now Corps commander were threatening him in a way to take power from him, and they finally did it. Later on General Chishti revealed the proceedings of the meeting with journalist Azhar Sohail (Sidique, 2021). Despite a distress Saudi Ambassador Riaz Ul

Khateeb and and Kuwait's special representative Rashid Sultan continued their efforts for an agreement. On 17th May Shah Iran sent his foreign minister Hashang Ansari, to Bhutto and urged him to reach an agreement with opposition as soon as possible as he "smelled" some conspiracy being hatched (Niazi, 1991). On 23rd May special envoy of Yasir Arafat of Palestine met Bhutto and conveyed a message of Mr. Arafat. Sardar Abdul Qayum Khan flew across the country to meet the detained leaders of PNA including Wali Khan and other leaders of defunct National Awami Party and others and returned back to Islamabad and reported Mufti Mehmood and Saudi Ambassador about his meeting and then met Bhutto along with ambassador. On 25th May Sardar Qayum told media men that a negotiating team was formed with Mufti Mehmood as team head and Professor Ghafoor and Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan as members and Pir Pagara was to be overseer. (Nawa-i-Waqt , 1977). On 27th May Riaz Ul Khateeb presented a letter of Mufti Mehmood to Bhutto which includes the demands of lifting of Martial Law and emergence, release of workers, withdrawal of cases, compensation of financial losses and stopping propaganda against national leaders. (Saleem, 1977) Prior to the start of the fresh and long-awaited round of negotiation Bhutto held another meeting with military generals on 31st May as the resumption date for talks was set as 3rd June. Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) General M. Sharif, three services chiefs (COAS) Gen Ziaul Haq, Naval Chief Admiral Mohammad Sharif, and Air Chief Air Marshal Zulfikar Ali Khan, federal ministers Hafeez Pirzada and Maulana Kausar Niazi attended the meeting. ^v In the meeting General Zia opposed the idea of referendum this time by saying that the army men and opposition would not accept the referendum. Maulana Kausar Niazi presented some possible solutions of the problem including handing over power to PNA, Bhutto's resignation, army take over and holding fresh elections by army at an appropriate time. On the option of army takeover Bhutto lauded that he would go to his native city. Immediately General Zia stood up and with bowed head said:

"No sir we have no such intention, we are the right arm of the government, we are loyal and we will remain loyal" (Niazi, Bhutto, 1993)

It was quite strange the holding of such meetings at this stage and presenting of an option of military takeover by a federal minister in front of top military brass. Was it a tactics of assessing the military mind or an overwhelming confidence of PM Bhutto, is not quite clear? Saudi ambassador conveyed the message of King Khalid to Bhutto on 1st June. He told Bhutto that PNA leadership wanted the secrecy of negotiation and guarantee that Bhutto would act on the agreed points, which Bhutto assured to Saudi ambassador. Bhutto government released all the leaders of PNA and after an impasse of three months direct talks were resumed on 3rd June. PNA leader Mufti Mehmood showed agreement to both the options including fresh elections within three months and holding elections in disputed constituencies but demanded certain assurances from the government. It was a big breakthrough in the negotiation proceedings as previously PNA rejected out rightly these options offered by government for more than one time. After a series of negotiation, the PNA leader Professor Ghafoor Ahmad told media persons that negotiations were leading to positive direction and PNA was totally satisfied with the proceedings and intentions of the Bhutto government (Daily Nawa-i-Waqt , 1977).

The agreement on 6th June about options of holding fresh elections or holding elections in disputed constituencies could not last long as "hawks" in PNA like Asghar Khan, Sherbaz Mazari, Nasim Wali Khan and Pir Pagara had developed personal animosity with Bhutto and developed contacts with those in powerful circles to oust Bhutto from power (Haidar, 2009).

After long proceedings PNA presented its last draft of agreement to government but on next day Asghar addressed a public meeting at Taxila near Rawalpindi vowed to take resignation from Bhutto, despite agreement on almost all points.

On 1st July Bhutto arranged a meeting of military generals to brief opposition about army actions in Baluchistan. The meeting was attended by three services chiefs, CJCS and opposition leaders of PNA. Nawabzada Nassrullah shared harsh remarks as he was of the view that army as a subordinate institution should briefing to government and government should brief opposition. According to him Bhutto himself was dragging the generals into political affairs which would be disastrous for the country. (Niazi, 1993) Long deliberations took place during the evening meeting on 1st July, which lasted approximately ten hours, and Bhutto agreed to practically every demand of the PNA to their satisfaction. The final agreement was

reached on points such as the Supreme Council's constituting and authority, dissolution of assemblies, the date for the National Assembly election was set for October 6th and October 8th for provincial assemblies, the lifting of emergency rules and the release of those arrested under emergency rules, and the dissolution of assemblies on July 15th, despite the Supreme Council's apprehensions. Bhutto agreed to construct the suggested Council, which would have broad powers over the president and the government, as well as the governors. The council would also have the power to take action against any government official who was accused of interfering with the holding of free and fair elections. In the event of Azad Kashmir matters, the Prime Minister would be obligated to carry out the council's recommendations, and the President would be obligated to do the same. The army would leave Baluchistan within 45 days of the agreement's signing, and efforts would be taken to establish a conducive environment for holding elections in the province, as well as measures to rehabilitate the region's displaced inhabitants. Without the approval of the Implementation Council, no regulation, order, or ordinance could be enacted (Burgri, 2002). The PNA's central council met in Islamabad on the morning of July 3rd, with heads of all member parties in attendance. Khalid Ishaq and Mian Mehmood Ali Kasure, both legal professionals, joined the meeting to provide their legal perspectives. PNA leaders decided to meet again in the evening of the same day after receiving the legal opinion. The evening meeting was attended by the leaders of the component parties. By taking a tough stance, Asghar Khan emphasised the importance of the legal team drafting a new draught of the agreement. The leaders of other parties did not agree with his requests. The opposition was clearly divided into two camps. The hardliners, led by Asghar Khan, even questioned the negotiating team's authority, claiming that if a draught of an agreement was prepared with unanimity, the team had no right to change it. Despite reaching an agreement with government and announced by the negotiating team of PNA headed by Mufti Mehmood, the hawks in PNA including Asghar Khan, Begaum Wali and Sherbaz Mazari supported by Maulana Noorani questioned the position of their own negotiating team by refusing to accept the agreement, perhaps on the behest of some "behind the curtain forces" (Trimzi, 1995).

Agreement Finalized

The negotiations were finalized as Bhutto accepted 31 points of demands and the last one was withdrawn by PNA, and the last step was to pass the agreement by the General Council of PNA. Asghar Khan tried to sabotage the agreement which added already found suspicions about his role. He threatened the PNA that if an agreement is signed with Bhutto, he will launch a public movement against the negotiating team of PNA. He also assured that army would elections within 90 days after toppling Bhutto government so at this stage no agreement should be signed with Bhutto. It was same Asghar Khan who wrote a very controversial letter to army officers inciting them not to obey the orders of the government, and threatened that if courts did not hang Bhutto, he himself would hang Bhutto on Kohala Bridge located on the Jhelum River at the boarder of Pakistan and Azad Kashmir. Presumably he was assured to be Bhutto's substitute after toppling Bhutto, so he was so rude and stubborn. (Niazi, 1991) After long deliberations both the parties agreed upon a draft and while addressing to a press conference on 4th July Bhutto told the press that both the parties reached an agreement and on 5th July the agreement would formally be signed (Akbar, 1977). Later on Professor Ghafoor Ahmad secretary general of PNA and a member of opposition's negotiating team confirmed that an agreement was reached. (Ahemad, 1988) While Bhutto was talking to media at the same time General Zia was meeting late at night at GHQ with his military commanders, finalize the plan to depose Bhutto because the government, according to them, had failed to maintain peace and order in the country. (Arif, 1995) After the press conference, Mumtaz Bhutto left the Prime Minister's Residence late and noticed military activity outside the house, which he told Bhutto about. Bhutto quickly dialed General Imtiaz, his military secretary, and then General Zia, but he was told that they both were busy at GHQ. When Bhutto managed to contact General Zia, the later verified the coup, saying, "Sir, everything you have heard is fact." "Sir, I regret to inform you that there was no way out of the crisis." (Kux, 2001). Bhutto, PPP and PNA leaders were taken into custody and sent to Murree where they remained confined for weeks to com. Democracy was derailed and another martial law was imposed, which proved later the most disastrous one.

CONCLUSION

The institution of democracy has always been very weak and fragile in Pakistan for many reasons. Military was directly in power about thirteen years before Bhutto came into power after the sad demise of the eastern wing of the country. Bhutto came into power in result of the first adult franchised based elections by securing majority in the western wing of the country, which was the leftover Pakistan. An unanimously adopted constitution put the country on the path of democracy but this could be lasted for a few years only as in result of foreign backed conspiracy all politicians were trapped, and they failed to anticipate the plot and showed rigidity and non-democratic attitude and provided an opportunity to the perpetrators to fulfill their agenda. Despite an agreement between the government and opposition longest and most rigorous martial law in the history of the country was imposed as it was too late on the part of politicians to show the maturity to solve the issue on negotiation table. The movement which was started on the allegation of rigging in about 22 NA constituencies converted into the implementation of *nizam-i-mustafa* and ended up with the imposition of martial law by military. Democracy was jeopardized which never returned in the country to a reasonable level and the country remained under direct military dictatorship or “controlled democracy” with least powers in the hands of civilian government.

REFERENCES

- Ahemad, A. G. (1988). *Phir Martial Law Aa Gaya. (Then came the Martial Law)*. Urdu. . Lahore: Jang Publishers.
- Akbar, S. (1977). *Elections 1977*. Karachi: Maktaba-i-Islam.
- Amin, T. (2007). 1977 Coup D'état in Pakistan. *Pakistan Journal of History and Culture, Vol. XXVIII, No.2*.
- Amin, T. (2007). Coup D'etat in Pakistan. *Pakistan Journal of History and Culture. Vol. XXVIII, No 2* .
- Anthony Hyman, M. G. (1989). *Pakistan: Zia and After*. New Delhi: Abhinav Publications.
- Arif, K. M. (1995). *Working with Zia: Pakistan's Power Politics 1977-1988*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Arora, V. G. (1997). *Pakistan, Fifty Years of Independence: A Chronology of Events, 1947-1997*. New Delhi: Deep and Deep Publications.
- Burgri, A. G. (2002). *Falcon of Pakistan*. Karachi: ZABIST.
- Burki, S. J. (1986). *Pakistan: The Continuing Search For Nationhood*. San Francisco:: West View Press.
- Chitkara., M. (1996). *Mohajir's Pakistan*. (New Delhi: APH Publishers.
- Daily Dawn. (1977, March 27). Karachi.
- Daily Dawn, , March 13, 1977). *Dawn*. Karachi.
- Daily Nawa-i-Waqt . (1977, June 7). *Daily Nawa-i-Waqt*. Rawalpindi.
- Daily *Nawa-i-Waqt* 1977, May 26). . Lahore.
- Haidar, S. A. (2009). *Bhutto trial*. Islamabad : Pakistan Academy of Letters.
- Hussain, S. S. (2000). *Ayub, Bhutto and Zia: How they Fell Victim of their own Plans*. Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publications,.
- Hussain, S. S. (2000). *Ayub, Bhutto, and Zia: How They Fell Victim to Their Own Plans* . Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publications.
- Jillani., A. (1991). *Advance Towards Democracy: the Pakistani Experience*. Lahore: Progressive Publications.
- Kapur, A. (2006). *Pakistan in Crisis*. Abingdon, Oxon : Taylor and Francis.
- Kaushik, S. N. (1995). *Pakistan under Bhutto's Leadership*. New Delhi: Upal Publishing House .

- Khan, H. (2020). *Constitutional and political history of Pakistan*. Karachi: Oxford University Press .
- Khan, M. A. (2008). *My Political Struggle*. Karachi : Oxford University Press.
- Kumar, S. (1978). *New Pakistan*. New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House.
- Kux, D. (2001). *United States and Pakistan, 1947-2000: Disenchanted Allies*. Washington : The Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Majumdar, R. (1998). *Pakistan: Jinnah to the Present Day. Edit. Vol. 2*. New Delhi: Anmol Publications.
- Manzooruddin Ahmed, C. P. (1980). *Contemporary Pakistan: Politics, Economy, and Society*. Karachi: Royal Books Co.
- Lahore: *.Pakistan Main Inqalab Aur Rad-e-Inqalab Ki Kahani* .Mehmood, R.S.(2010)
- Mushahid Hussain, . H. (1993). *Pakistan: Problems of Governance*. Delhi, India: Konark Publishers,.
- Naji, N. (2014, March 5). *Dunya Newspaper* . Islamabad.
- Niyāzī, K. (1991). *Last days of premier Bhutto*. Lahore : Jang Publishers.
- Pakistan Affairs, volume 30-32. (1977). Washington: Information Division, Embassy of Pakistan.
- Pakistan Horizon, V. 3. (1977). Pakistan Institute of International Affairs.
- Political Chronology of Central, S. a. (2003). Europa Publications.
- Raza., R. (1998). *Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Pakistan : 1967-1977*. Karachi : Oxford University Press .
- Saleem, M. (1977). *Intakhabaat 1977(Elections 1977)*. (Urdu). Karachi: Rasheed Sons Publishers.
- Sayeed, K. B. (1980). *Politics in Pakistan: The Nature and Direction of Change*. Rawalpindi: Praeger Publication.
- Sherwani, L. A. (1980). *Pakistan, China and America*. Karachi: Council of Pakistan Studies .
- Sidique, J. (2021, July 17). Resident Editor Daily Nawa-i-Waqt Islamabad.
- Surendra Nath. (1995).
- Trimizi, S. A. (1995). *Profiles of Intelligence*. Lahore: NM.
- Wolpert, S. (1993). *Zulfi Bhutto of Pakistan : his life and times* . New York: Oxford University Press.
- Wynbrandt, J. (2005). *A brief History of Pakistan*. Newyork: InfoBase Publishing.
-