

POLITICAL INSTABILITY AND INSTITUTIONAL INTERPLAY: A STUDY OF PAKISTAN'S FRAGILE DEMOCRATIC JOURNEY 1947-1969

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Abstract

This research article explores the democratic and political developments in Pakistan during its initial years from 1947 to 1969. The article primarily focuses on the interplay between the bureaucracy, military, and political elites. The study examines how institutional dynamics and leadership decisions shaped Pakistan's democratic and political trajectory, leading to periodic disruptions in democratic processes. It highlights the central role of the bureaucracy, the military's increasing involvement in politics, and the political elite's contribution to institutional instability. The article provides a critical analysis of democratic challenges and provides insights into the long-term implications of these developments on the country's political culture.

Key words: Democracy, Political Instability, military and bureaucratic involvement,

Introduction

The creation of Pakistan was highly motivated on the democratic provisions with special reference to Islam. Islam provides equality to all social groups and the inception of Pakistan was also promised to be based on the democratic setup. There had been historical efforts for separate electorates and the elections of 1945-46 were held on the same provisions. But the post-independence period witnessed the numerous hurdles in the way of democracy. The practice of democracy was chiefly targeted by the undemocratic and authoritarian stakeholders because the frequent interventions halted the democracy (Bashir, 2020).

There were multiple factors responsible for the weak democratic system including the politics, bureaucracy and military mainly. The politicians did not create a friendly environment to establish a well-managed political organization because they were indulged into the personal rivalries and the political parties' objectives. This created political chaos and helped the undemocratic and non-elected persons to take over the political role (Bashir, 2020). Throughout the first decade of 1947-58, a tug of war like situation prevailed in the new born country where the bureaucracy adopted the lead role in running the administrative matters of the country. This led to political instability which lingered on the democratic setup and further the inclusion of the powerful and unelected organs hindered the democratic process in country. This research article deals with the democratic process and challenges to democracy in the early years of independence. It also elaborates the political developments from 1947 to 1969. All of the major democratic and undemocratic developments of the aforementioned era are elaborated in this study.

Research Objectives

- To point out the major challenges to democracy in Pakistan during 1947-69
- To highlight the factors led to increase military and bureaucratic involvement in political governance during 1947-1969.
- To explain the role of political elite in weakening the democratic process during 1947-69.

Methodology

The current research is based on qualitative approach. Purpose of the study was to explore the different factors which led to increases the undemocratic role in Pakistan's democracy during the period of 1947-69. It required the extensive desk review because this study was based on secondary sources of data collection so the authors collected data from multiple sources including books, historical archives, research articles and other online sources.

Early Years 1947-1957

The early years of Pakistan suffered from the large scale of political instability. The politicians were divided into different groups and even the leadership of Pakistan Muslim League was also divided soon after the sudden demise of Jinnah. Furthermore, the role of civil-military and judicial bureaucracy also affected the democratic setup during these years. This section deals with all those major events related to political developments and the issues encircled the democratic culture.

Initial Disturbances

The idea of Pakistan was based to establish a welfare state where the masses will have equality and liberty to observe their religious practices peacefully. The founders of Pakistan also wished to establish a democratic state with inclusion of both Islamic and modern values. The parliamentary system was chosen and the Indian Independence Act was opted as the interim constitution till the new constitution was promulgated (Akhtar, 1974). An interim government was established to run the political and administrative matters of the country. Under this interim government, the Governor General was the supreme authority to appoint the high rank officials including military and judiciary etc. So, under the interim setup, a council of ministers was formed to assist the governor general about certain matters. Meanwhile, the constituent assembly was established to work on the constitution making (Choudhry, 1963).

An electoral process is the backbone of a democratic system but in the case of Pakistan the general elections were not held till 1970. This was the earliest challenge to democracy in Pakistan because it failed to elect the political candidates to run the democracy. Although the provincial elections were held but it also faced many troubles in all major provinces. There created a tussle between Mamdoot and Daultana in Punjab over the chief minister ship and the same was the situation in Sindh and other provinces too.

In accordance to the freedom movement, it was hoped that Pakistan will be an example of both Islamic and democratic world because the leadership was highly motivated to establish such state. But soon after the inception and sudden demise of Jinnah, the political scenario withered away. The political workers who were admirer of the democracy were replaced by the unelected individuals especially from bureaucracy and military institutions. It discouraged the political and democratic movement in the new born country and it became a prey of dominant junta (Jalal, 1995).

Constitution was an urgent need for the new born country because constitution provides a roadmap that how a specific country would work. The constituent body was established to prepare a future constitution but constituent assembly failed to do so. The process of constitution making continued

to linger on that it took almost a decade to promulgate the first constitution. This was also a prominent challenge which Pakistan faced during the early years. During the long period of seven years, the constituent assembly organized only sixteen sessions with average attendance of the members. It shows that there were some behind the scene efforts which did not allow to formulate the future constitution. This delay in the induction of constitution reveals that democracy faced challenges since the independence of Pakistan (Beg, 1977).

Role of Bureaucracy

The politicians are the backbone to run the administration of the country but in the light of initial years of Pakistan, there were a few seasoned politicians to perform the same duties. So, the bureaucracy was involved into the political matters of the country which provided a safe road to the bureaucracy to get advantage of their authorities and indulged into the political activities. The most of the provincial ministers were inexperienced so the major responsibilities were laid on the shoulders of the governors. The majority of the governors were bureaucrats including the provinces of west Punjab, east Bengal, and NWFP. These bureaucrats were British which was another drawback of the political institution (Callard, 1957).

The amalgamation of the British and the bureaucrats was another challenge to democracy in Pakistan. Jinnah was handling the federal issues and it was not possible for him to undertake the provincial and local matters too so he decided to give the administrative responsibilities to the bureaucracy. This started the bureaucratic involvement in the political matters which weakened the political organization from initial stage. At the same time, the politicians were also not ready to create a friendly environment to bridge a gap between the east and the west Pakistan. This separation of the political wings between east and west Pakistan again provided a fortunate opportunity to the bureaucracy to enjoy the substantial powers as compared to the political workers i.e., ministers (Ziring, 1980).

The political leadership also lacked the administrative experience because there were only a few experienced politicians who had been a part of previous governments. The most of the politicians were just the part of freedom movement and they had zero experience to handle the provincial and federal administration. So, the major focus was laid on the bureaucracy to handle the governing matters. This bureaucratic involvement proved the major challenge to democracy because they facilitated the military rule in the country. The triggers behind the imposition of first martial law were the bureaucrats. For example, Iskender Mirza who imposed the first martial law was also a bureaucrat. With the passage of time, bureaucracy expanded their jaw grip over the political institution that in the present time same bureaucratic role is being played in the political matters (Bashir, 2020).

Another reason of bureaucratic involvement was the decline of the popularity of Pakistan Muslim League. Just before the partition, every Muslim was in the favor of league and this was the reason the Muslims got a separate homeland. But after the partition, the attitudes of the political leadership also changed because the political leadership was divided on different basis which declined the fame of league. This again provided a free road for the bureaucracy to take on the political responsibilities because they had administrative experience under the British government (Malik, 2001). The martial law was not imposed suddenly rather it had long roots of the undemocratic involvement into the politics. Ghulam Muhammad (former governor general of Pakistan) was also a bureaucrat who sworn the power with the assistance General Ayyub Khan. Ghulam Muhammad proved like nightmare to the democracy in Pakistan because he did not allow to consolidate democracy. He dismissed many prime ministers during his tenure and later was replaced by another

bureaucrat Iskender Mirza who imposed the martial law first time in the history of Pakistan and sacked the democratic movement in Pakistan.

Downfall of Democracy

Pakistan is perhaps one of those democratic countries where democracy declined before it could be established because the attitudes of the politicians, authoritarian nature of the state institutions including judiciary, bureaucracy and military collectively damaged democracy. During the tenure of first prime minister of the country, the criticism on the league's policies and decisions was not encouraged which snubbed the role of opposition. In a democratic system, the role of opposition is vital to run the governing system in better way but if the prime minister himself says that "Don't oppose the League" the democracy cannot work. This led to autocratic system which is contrary to the democratic line (Callard, 1957). The political enmity of the different political parties encouraged the undemocratic intervention into the politics. This was the reason that Ghulam Muhammad who was a civil servant became the apex authority. He later developed the strong collaboration between the civil and military bureaucracy. This collaboration further derailed the democracy and the major reason was the indifferent attitude of the politicians (Kardar, 1988).

The governor general Ghulam Muhammad started the undemocratic practices soon after assuming the power. Khwaja Nazimuddin was one of the seasoned politicians who already had served as the second governor general of Pakistan but later assumed the charge of prime minister. Ghulam Muhammad removed him from premiership and appointed Muhammad Ali Bogra as the prime minister who was again a bureaucrat and then serving as Ambassador to US. This further declined the political organization and strengthened the civil-military bureaucracy relationship (Ardath, 1954).

In the meanwhile, the constituent assembly was drafting the first constitution which could provide a democratic road but the governor general dissolved the assembly. The main motive behind this dissolution was that the constitution was aimed at decreasing the powers of governor general which lingered on the constitutional and democratic process. There was already a weak collaboration between the east and west Pakistan about the constitution making because the Bengalis had some reservations regarding this constitution so they seemed happy over the dissolution of the assembly (Sherwani, 1962). There were a few democratic politicians who were against such monocratic political system because the dissolution of the constituent assembly was a clear message to derail the democracy and prosper undemocratic system. Maulvi Tamizuddin who was the president of the constituent assembly filed a reference against the governor general's action in the Sindh High Court. The court gave the verdict by saying that dissolution of the assembly was unconstitutional but later the apex court favored the governor general's action. The media was highly controlled because the civil, military and judicial bureaucracy were on the same page which led to the democracy on stake (Chowdhury, 1988).

The undemocratic attitude of the governor general weakened the democratic and political activities throughout his tenure. At last, his tenure ended and the second constituent assembly was established to work on constitution making. This assembly was based on different political parties' workers so no single party had majority. In such scenario, the unelected, a bureaucrat enjoyed the extreme powers as a governor general firstly Ghulam Muhammad and later Iskender Mirza (Rizvi, 2000). Being a bureaucrat, Iskender Mirza also preferred to bring the other bureaucrats in the key positions. He selected Chaudhary Muhammad Ali as the prime minister to run the executive administration. As the situation was set on to hold the general elections for the future leadership,

Iskander Mirza became the president and the elections were postponed. The holding of elections would ultimately end the role of bureaucracy in the politics but the civil-military bureaucratic collaboration became so powerful that it did not let the democracy work and the elections were delayed (Sayeed, 1958).

Later, the first constitution of 1956 was promulgated and Suhrawardy replaced the earlier prime minister Choudhary Muhammad Ali. Suhrawardy was a political worker who belonged to east Pakistan and sought to revive the constitutional powers of the prime minister. He tried to expand the powers of the prime minister and to make it clear that under this constitution, the president of the country had not the same powers as the governor general had in previous time. This alarmed the bells of danger for the president who changed the entire game of the political numbers because Suhrawardy had the support of 26 members from the coalition government (Sayeed, 1958).

After this tussle between prime minister and the president, the Republican Party withdrew its support for prime minister. Suhrawardy had last chance to gain the vote of confidence so he advised the president to summon the national assembly but his constitutional request was declined. It was clear that Suhrawardy would also be replaced by the new one. This shows that political parties always remained in lust of power and benefits. They changed their modes and withdrew their political support in the initial years too which posed a serious threat to the democracy and the undemocratic and authoritarian stakeholders continued to enjoy their prestige and powers in all possible ways.

Political Decline

The early decades of the partition faced the tough political situation because the political organization was almost declined. There were numerous factors of this political decline i.e., military, bureaucracy, judiciary and politicians. The dominant role of the civil-military bureaucracy played key role in destabilizing the political and democratic development during these decades. The continued ministerial crisis at the central and provincial levels did not allow to organize a political movement on the basis of democracy because they were unable to prepare plans and make policies on democratic culture (Syed, 1989).

At the same time, the limited role of the minor political parties in the mainstream politics also prompted the growth of democratic movement. Pakistan Muslim League (PML) was the only dominant political party with a sound political background but its leadership did not establish smooth relations with other political parties of the both east and west wings and monopolized the whole political system. This was another drawback for the democracy as the popularity of the same political party was almost ended just before the imposition of the first martial law. The determinants of the PML decline were power politics among the leaders, the lack of democratic culture, and insufficiency of rational party programs. This provided the chance to the bureaucracy to take over the political responsibilities and replaced the politicians which was contrary to democratic culture (Syed, 1989). The promulgation of the first constitution should provide a way for democratic setup but it failed to do so because the promulgation of this constitution there rose conflicts among the various groups mainly between the east and west Pakistani political groups. This constitution also did not provide a roadmap to restrict the role of bureaucracy into the political matters. Resultantly, the constitution of 1956 could not work for a long time (Chowdhury, 1988). The political downfall was not only motivated by the undemocratic powers but also through the politicians as well. PML started to be divided into different groups because all of them were in the hunt of the political powers. All of them would not be compensated so they parted their ways and posed serious concerns to the political situation. For example, the Daultana group stood against

Mamdot (chief minister of Punjab) which led to dissolution of the Punjab government within just half of the year of partition. The same was the situation with the Sindh assembly which also dismissed within a year. Such incidents not only declined the political process but also derailed the democracy.

The east Pakistan was also not out of the political troubles because it also passed through the same political crisis. In the eastern wing Fazal-ul-Haq secured the government in accordance to the results of 1954 electoral but the autocratic central government did not allow him to work and dismissed his government in east Pakistan. The governor was appointed by the center who handled the political matters in the absence of the chief minister. This again hampered the democracy and fostered the undemocratic practices (Rizvi, 2000).

In accordance to the above-mentioned details, it is concluded that the political situation of the country was totally mismanaged. The autocratic styled administration was practiced where the bureaucracy played the main role. The political workers were not allowed to perform their assigned duties at the provincial and federal levels. The chief ministers and the prime ministers were continued to be changed over a short period of time and most of them were unelected. The process of constitution was lingered on and the political workers played limited role for the same task due to the dominant role of the bureaucrats. The democracy was almost totally neglected in so-called parliamentary decade from 1947-1958 (Kardar, 1988).

Ayyub Era 1958-69

The political destabilization and the bureaucratic role into the political sphere provided the safe heavens to the military to take over the control of country. So, with the consent of Iskender Mirza, Ayyub Khan imposed martial law in 1958. The military takeover was not the sudden change of the politics rather its involvement had been started during the early fifties. Before the martial law of 1958, military had already imposed the martial law in Punjab in 1953. So, the military already was aware about the drawbacks of the politicians and was seeking the opportunity to taste the same which was executed by Ayyub Khan (Khan, 2005).

The military interventions are mostly successful in the countries where the masses have little awareness like that of Pakistan during the fifties. Military witnessed the situation that all of the state institutions are unorganized and they do not have power to resist the military takeover. On one side, the civil society was uneducated and the fragileness of the state institutions on the other hand insisted the military to impose martial (Rizvi, 2013). The common people were also fed up from the routine confrontation of the politicians over the changing provincial governments and delayed process of constitution making. So, as the martial law was imposed, they felt a breath of relief that they got rid of the routine political tussle. They also believed that military rule would help to put the country on the track of social and economic development (Gauhar, 1996).

After assuming the control of the country, the first task carried out by Ayyub Kahn was to control the political resistance. He easily managed his opposition by jailing the prominent political leadership including the central and provincial ministers who could give tough time to his rule. For doing the so, he issued Elective Body Disqualification Order (EBDO) and Public Officers Disqualification Order (PODA). Under these orders he controlled the politicians as well as the public officials who were found involved into the corruption.

Ayyub Khan replaced almost the entire political scenario of the country by introducing a new political class. The politicians convicted under EBDO were disqualified and they were forbade to take part into the political activities. This restricted the seasoned politicians like Ayyub Khoro, Kahan Qayyum Khan and Hussain Shaheed Suhrawardy and new class of politicians with feudal

background were inducted into the political arena. This was the bitterest form autocratic rule which not only derailed the democracy but also tried to exclude the top political leadership class. The word of EBDO was used as a shame because the targeted politicians were demoralized through this step of military (Ahmad, 1971).

Ayyub Khan wanted to legalize his rule and wished to gain international support so it was necessary to include the political class into his rule to get accepted so he introduced the system of Basic Democracy and showed that how much he worried about democracy. Under the BD system, the elections were held in 1959 and a total of 80,000 democrats were elected from both eastern and western wings (Maluka, 1995). Ayyub Khan basically created a new political class from the grass root level which might support him. After the election of Basic Democrats, he got him selected the president of Pakistan. Once he was selected as president, a new chapter started in the political history of Pakistan because the most of the previous politicians were excluded from the - politics. The new political class again started to practice the same relations with bureaucracy as were during the first decade of independence (Alvi, 1983).

With the imposition of martial law, the constitution of 1956 was abrogated so the main task was to formulate the future constitution of the country. Hence, after being selected as the president he promulgated the constitution of 1962. Under the provisions of this constitution, all of the main powers were vested to the president and limited the powers of executive body which was again a challenge to democracy (Jalal, 1995).

Under the Ayyub era, the political parties were banned but during the elections time some of the political parties were allowed to take part in the elections. This depicted that political parties were allowed to run the political activities. There was established an alliance under the leadership of Suhrawardy named as National Democratic Front (NDF) which gained the support of 54 members from both wings. Later, NDF made alliance with other political parties to counter Ayyub Khan known as Combined Opposition Parties (COP). The main objective of this alliance was to restore democracy fully not partly (Jalal, 1995).

Ayyub's led Conventional Muslim League nominated Ayyub Khan as the presidential candidate while on the other side Combined Opposition Parties nominated Fatima Jinnah as their presidential candidate. This was the best option for the COP because only she could pose tough time to authoritarian rule of Ayyub Khan. Fatima Jinnah had so much emotional support of the civil society being the sister of Jinnah but Ayyub Khan was full of the lust of power and proclaimed himself the best option for the president. The political parties under the COP alliance had lack of trust with each other but at the same time Ayyub Khan had full support of the civil and military bureaucracy (Rizvi, 2013). This was first time during Ayyub's era that he was facing such bitter opposition. He was terrified to lose his power but he was assured by the bureaucracy that he would not lose. At last, the elections were held and Ayyub Khan won the presidential elections while securing 63.21% votes and Fatima Jinnah could secure only 36.6% of the votes. Ultimately, Ayyub Khan became the president of the country through the elections in 1965 (Khan, 1967).

Ayyub Khan continued to maintain the undemocratic rule through the coercive forces and created strong pressure among the political parties and the civil society. The political and administrative machinery was under the military rule yet the political parties like Jamat-e-Islami, Niafaz-e-Islam Party, Awami League, and Council Muslim League established a political alliance to give tough time to the military rule. But they could not create as much pressure on the military era as it ought to be due to the controlled media and terrified civil society. Ayyub Khan's regime had tightened the grip over the whole society which was the main reason Fatima Jinnah lost the election (Khan,

2007). Such tyrannical era had to be ended one day and the same was happened that Tashkent Declaration proved a turning point which declined the popularity of the Khan. The strong opposition voices erupted across the country and Ayyub Khan decided to hand over the powers to another military dictator Yahya Khan.

Conclusion

The above-mentioned extensive details provided different aspects of democratic and political journey in Pakistan during the tenure of 1947-1969. It is found from the data analysis that democracy and political development of initial years faced a strong pressure from the bureaucratic and military institutions. The very initial regime was highly dominated by the bureaucratic elites due to lack of seasoned political figures. The sudden demise of Jinnah and personal rivalries of the political parties provided safe roads to the authoritarian and undemocratic institutions to run the political matters. The lack of political trust and deviation from the core values of democracy derailed the democratic process. Furthermore, the undemocratic stakeholders enlarged their authoritarian rules due to the lust of power and personal gains.

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