

## Democracy and Party Politics in Pakistan: A Historical Perspective (1947-1977)

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**Abstract:** This research paper explores the historical evolution and in-depth analysis of the emergence and development of different political parties and factions in Pakistan from 1947-1977. This period is marked by significant political crisis, instability social change and quest for democratic governance. The All India Muslim League, the largest Muslim party which became Pakistan Muslim League after the creation of Pakistan played a crucial role in the independence and after the independence of Pakistan. Following the independence, the political landscape of Pakistan is characterized by a single major political party and some small political parties. However this mass political party grappled with issues of identity, personality clashes, leadership crisis, political instability, structural imbalance and governance issues which resulted in creation of many small factions and political parties. This paper aims to offer valuable insights into the foundational dynamics that continue to shape the country's party system and political discourse.

**Keywords:** Political Parties, Factions, Political Development, Instability, Multi-party System, Pakistan

### Introduction

After the very struggle of Muslim leaders and All India Muslim League (AIML), the only Muslims representative party became successful to get a separate independent state from the British Empire in August 1947. In the struggle for independence of Pakistan AIML was one main political party representing the Muslims of India, although Jammāt-i- Islami (JI), Khudai Khidmatgar, Jammiat-i-Ulama-e- Islam and many other small Parties were also existed but these were not more active and were considered commonly just movements. AIML, which after the independence became Pakistan Muslim League (PML), considered the only active political party in Pakistan, or some scholars simply say that Pakistan had uni-Party political system when it got independence. Soon after the independence, this uni-party system changed to a multi-party system. Sense of Deprivation of the people of East Pakistan, religious differences, personality clashes and divergence of the interest of the Muslim League's leaders led to the formation of a number of factions of the Muslims League (Niazi, Usman, & Niaz, 2008). Under the interim constitution, Indian Independence Act 1935 the government was set up, Quaid-e-Azam was selected as first Governor General and Liaquat Ali Khan as first prime minister of Pakistan (Farooq, 2014).

Soon after the independence, the new state faced a number of internal and external problems. In those initial problems political ethnic, religious, sectarian and lingual problems were on the peak. Other than these, external threats were also on very alarming stage, but despite all these internal and external problems Quaid-e-Azam was working hard for the solution of the all these problems and for the

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unification of the new nation, but unfortunately the early death of the founding father impacted the early solutions of the aforementioned problems. Pakistan Muslim League also lost its president. The political structure of the party collapsed and the leading political party was now had a very weak and nominal body. By the personal and political differences, PML was divided into a number of small factions. All these divisions and factions were the result of the ethnic, religious, sectarians and linguistic issue because every leader wanted to gain the support of the people by misguiding and exploiting their feeling and emotions. The main reason was behind all the political turmoil were the lack of leadership and weak structure of ML(Niazi, Usman, & Niaz, 2008). ML a major political party of the nation had become the group of self-centered leadership which was struggling for their own personal interests(Khan, 2005).

### **First Constitution Making and the Emergence of Different Political Groups**

Political history of Pakistan is full of all political ups and down. Since its birth, Pakistan faced the leadership crisis. After the death of Quaid-e-Azam, Khawja Nazim-ud-din became the governor general and then PM of the country after the assassination of Liaquat Ali Khan, and Ghulam Muhammad the defense minister was chosen as new governor general. Nazim-ud-din ruled the country from 1951-1953 but the language and religious controversy were on the peak. In Punjab the clashes between Ahmdia groups and Jammt-ul-Arhrar and other religious parties deteriorated the situation, but this was not end here, the first decade of our political history with the changing of seven PM and three Governor General show the inappropriate political structure and weak institutions. There were power abuse and exploitation of people and institutions by the political leaders. By the weak performance of political leaders in the first decade Pakistan entered into a military rule.

By studying the history of first decade one can say in simple words that Pakistan remained in the state of nature as Thomas Hobbes describes in his book about the state of nature, that there was ruthless struggle for power gain, war of all against all, each group was fighting against another. So in the first democratic decade of country Pakistani society faced the Hobbes's state of nature in which each political party and group was fighting against another for power, and every political or ethnic group was fighting for its self-interests. Political Parties are made to unite the people and support the government institutions, but due to the selfish element in the political parties and weak and undemocratic structure of these political groups this multiparty system affected the national integration very negatively in our first democratic decade (Majeed, 2011).

Muslim League as Ruling Party's journey from 1947-1958: Muslim League was the leading, ruling and majority party of the new nation. Pakistani top leaders and all members of first constituent assembly belonged to this party. This was the integrating and unifying party of the Muslims in this new nation but unfortunately, after the deaths of Quaid-e-Azam the party fractured and gave birth a number of small factions, which are mentioned here;

### **All Pakistan Awami Muslim League (APAML)**

This was the first faction of Muslim League it was created by the Hussain Shaheed Suhrawardy from the East Pakistan in 1949. He had the political differences on the party elitism and these clashes widen the gap between people and Party leaders.

**Jinnah Muslim League (JML)**

This was also the outcome of the personal clashes of the leaders of the Muslim League. Jinnah Muslim League was made by Iftikhar Hussain Mamdot first chief minister of Punjab and a very close friend of Jinnah. After not following some direction of the Party and Prime Minister's instruction he was ousted from his chief minister-ship in the reaction of his loss of seat he made his own political party in 1950 and contested election against ML in 1951 for the second constituent assembly (Mehmood, 1988).

**Jinnah Awami Muslim League (JAML)**

This was the combination party of All Pakistan Awami Muslim League and Jinnah Muslim League made in 1950.

**Azad Pakistan Party (APP)**

Azad Pakistan Party was a leftist faction founded in 1949. Mian Iftikhair was a focal person of the left wing of Muslim League, after the demise of Jinnah he made this a leftist party of Azad Pakistan taking all socialist members of ML, but later merged with National Awami Party in 1957 with some other socialists' members (Mehmood, 1988).

**Sindh Muslim League (SML)**

Ayub Khuro was the leader of Muslim League in Sindh and also chief minister of Sindh. In 1952 severe clashes and fighting with the members of Muslim League he ousted from his chief minister seat then he organized his own party named with Sindh Muslim League.

**United Front (UF)**

This was the alliance of three East Pakistan political parties, Jinnah Awami Muslim League later Awami League, a secular party with alliance of People Committee Party and Nizam-i-Islami right wing party. This alliance was made in the provincial election of East Wing in 1954 which gained majority seats in provincial assembly of East Wing. ML by its ignorance and poor performance in East Pakistan won just 10 seats out of 309 total seats.

**Republican Party (RP)**

This was a secular center-right party formed in 1955 by Iskander Mirza the Governor General of Pakistan. This party was supported by the military, establishment and Governor General. Some Muslim League's members also joined this party for their time being interest. This party had a number of differences with Jinnah Awami League East wing party. This party ended in 1958 with military raid of Ayub Khan.

**Awami League (AL)**

It came into existence due to the merger of All Pakistan Awami Muslim League and Jinnah Awami Muslim League, which had named Jinnah Awami League, again shortened its name to Awami League. This was basically the East wing representative party which showed his majority support in the 1954 provincial election. Mujib-ur-Rehman was a leading figure of this party. This party became the founding party of Bangladesh in 1971. These all were small factions of ML, made by its leaders due to their personal and political clashes. These factions were not in the position to run the political system and later some of these parties ended or again merged with the ML.

### **National Awami Party (NAP)**

NAP was the outcome of some political differences with the Hussain Shaheed Suharwardy leader of Awami League an East Wing of Pakistan representative party. Maulana Bashani made his own political party on 25<sup>th</sup> July 1957. Although this was a leftist political party, so soon after the formation of this many leftist parties of the west Pakistan joint this new party, especially Pakistan National Party which was the combination of the Azad Pakistan Party, Surukhposh Party, Sindhi Awami Mahaz and many others small parties. Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, Abdul Samad, Abdul Karim, and Maulana Bashani were the prominent leaders of this party. These main leaders were favoring provincialism due to the deprivation of the small provinces. Bacha Khan was demanding his separate state in the name of Pukhtoonistan in NWFP, Achakzai's slogan for Baluchistan and Baluchi and Sindudash for Sindhi People. So from the very start this party was propagating its agenda for the socialism and regionalism. There was not much internal bond among these different parties under the umbrella of National Awami Party, all leaders were working for their own interests, so this political bond ended quickly and the party divided into different groups. One group was organized under the leadership of Bacha Khan later this group called Wali Khan Group by his son name, and became a strong regional party in NWFP and Baluchistan (Mehmood, 1988).

### **Jammat-i- Islami (JI)**

When Jammat-i-Islami was made 1941 it was a pure right wing and based on Islamic principles. In the start of its formation it was just a movement for the revival and unification of Muslim of sub-continent under the leadership of Maulana Mawdudi and other Muslims ulamas. The party was considering itself as an apolitical party and not taking any active part in the politics. After the partition this party made its manifesto flexible and started struggle for making an Islamic government in the new nation. Although this was not a popular party but the members were very active and sincere in their struggle. Till 1957 this party did not participate in the active politics of the country but in provincial election of Punjab and corporation election of Karachi Jammat-i-Islami took more than a dozen seats, by this success Jammat-i-Islami entered in the politics of the country with a great victory (Khan, 2005). Jamiat-i- Ulama-e- Islam (JUI): This was the group of Ulamas of the sub-continent supporting and struggling for the independence of Pakistan. This was formed in a public meeting in Oct 1945 in Calcutta. Maulana Shabir Ahmad Usmani was the first president of this party, who was also the member of the first constituent assembly of Pakistan and did a lot of struggle for making an Islamic constitution and Islamic system in the new country. After the demise of Maulana Shabir Ahmad the leadership was given to Syed Sulaiman Nadvi. Other than these political parties some other factions and groups were also present. i.e. United Progressive Party, Malik Feroz Noon Group of League, Pakistan Congress Scheduled Caste Federation, Jammat-ul-Ahrar a counter-movement to the Ahmadiya Party (Khan, 2005). Martial Law and Position of the Political Parties 1958-1969: The first decade of poor democratic performance of leaders with the changing Prime ministers and governor generals had weakened the political structure of the country. Then situation got worse when Ayub Khan military general working as a defense minister was invited to become the first Chief Martial Law Administrator (CMLA). It was 8<sup>th</sup> Oct 1958 when Ayub Khan took the political control of the country. The constitution was abrogated, political rights were snatched and all political parties and political movements were banned. So when martial law was declared the constitution was abrogated, national and provincial assemblies were dissolved and banned all the political parties of the country and froze their assets as well. Then in March 1959 the military regime issued an order of Elected Body Disqualification Order (EBDO) this military order was basically for the disqualification of all the major political leaders

from their political activities. By this act nearly 75 key political leaders were disqualified and imprisoned. In the disqualified politicians the Suharwardy, Qayyum Khan and Ayub Khuroo were on top list. Similarly, another act was also imposed for the civil servants and disqualified nearly 3000 officials under the charge of corruption, favoritism and nepotism. Under the agenda of cleansing the system from corrupt people, in actually Ayub Khan wanted to justify and expand his rule in Pakistan. After the removal of all these politicians and officials Ayub Khan gave a new constitution with presidential form of government on 1<sup>st</sup> March 1962. After nearly 44 months of ruling as CMLA became the president of the country with a new constitution (Khan, 2005).

### **Convention Muslim League and Council Muslim League**

After the promulgation of the new constitution in 1962 all political parties and political activities were restored. Ayub Khan wanted to get a civilian face for this purpose he contacted the original Muslim League and joined hands with some senior leaders in a convention and Muslim League was divided between two faction one supporter of Ayub Khan that was Convention Muslim League and the other one was Council Muslim League which was against the Ayub Khan's regime. So for contesting the general election Ayub Khan made his own party on the name of Convention Muslim League with the support of some members of ML in 1962 (Mahmood, 2019).

### **Combined Opposition Party (COP)**

After the five years ban on all the political parties, Ayub Khan made his own political party for the presidential election and for getting the civilian face. The combined opposition party was the alliance of five major political parties made to oppose the political campaign of Ayub Khan by the great effort of Nazim-ud-din. In this COP Council Muslim League, Jammāt-i-Islami, under leadership of Maulana Maududi, Awami League of Sheikh Mujib-ur-Rehman, National Awami party of Abdul Wali Khan, and Nizami-i-Islami party were the main parties (Qureshi, 1966). Besides to oppose Ayub Khan's regime it was also decided in COP that a joint candidate will be fielded in the presidential election. For this position the name of Fatima Jinnah sister of Quaid-e-Azam was made final (Jalal, 2014). In the election result besides the majority support with the COP, Ayub Khan won the election by unfair means. COP did not accept the result and started protest against the rigging in the election (Mahmood, 2019). COP after losing in the presidential election lost its courage and hope for the general election, due to the lost hope and courage, absence of unity, representing their own agenda by different parties in COP and the dominant position of Council Muslim League in COP could not win the national and provincial election as well. There were personality and interest clashes in COP after the presidential election and integration of these parties faded (Hussain, 2018).

### **Formation of Pakistan People Party 1967**

Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto was the foreign minister in Ayub Khan's presidency. He was also general secretary of Convention Muslim League, but in 1967 due to the political differences with Ayub Khan he made his own political party with the name of Pakistan People Party, and resigned from the ruling cabinet. The main agenda of this party was economic socialism. Bhutto wanted to establish the socialist and equal economic system in Pakistan. The slogan which attracted all the young and old people was Food, Clothes and Shelter (*Roti, Kapra, Makan*). The main supporter of this party was students, labors, peasants, poor and deprived people. In a very short time of span PPP got popularity due to its charismatic leader and attractive slogan

and call of economic equality. In 1970 election PPP was second majority party in the whole country and first majority party in the West Pakistan. After the partition of East Pakistan, PPP established its rule in the West Pakistan. This was the first civilian government in Pakistan's political history. PPP leadership gave a democratic constitution to the country and rule till 1977(Jalal, 2014).

### **Formation of Pakistan Jamhuri Party 1969**

In June 1969 Pakistan Jamhuri Party or Pakistan Democratic Party was made by Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan, which was the combination of four political parties i.e. Nizam-i-Islami Party, Awami League, National Democratic Front and Justice Party. Chauhdary Muhammad Ali was president and Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan was vice-president of the party. The main aim of this party was to establish Islamic society based on the Islamic teaching, Quran and Sunnah, but the alliance of the political leaders was shattered very soon due to their personal interests. The party was damaged when the main leadership resigned from the party. Although the membership of this party were mostly educated political members and retired army officers, but this party could not get his due position in the politics of the country in 1970 election, PDP got just one seat and even Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan was defeated in the election by a PPP candidate.

### **Pakistan Democratic Movement 1967**

In 1967 Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan made an alliance of five political parties to counter the Ayub's regime and for the restoration of democracy. Alliance was named by Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) but later name was changed with Pakistan Democratic Action Committee (PDAC). This Democratic action committee played a vital role in the fall of Ayub Khan by getting the support of the common masses, peasants and worker throughout the country. PDAC and opposition's protest exposed his undemocratic actions to people during the celebration of his decade of development. Ayub Khan made a major imprisonment of the leaders but the situation got worse and finally he stepped down and invited COAS for another coup. On 25<sup>th</sup> March 1969 again Martial Law was declared and Agha Muhammad Yaha Khan became Chief of Marital Law Administrator(Sayeed, 1980).

### **Justice Party 1969**

Justice Party was formed by Ashgar Khan Air Marshal of Pakistan and former head of the Pakistan International Airlines. In 1968 when there was complete disorder in the political environment of Pakistan and protests for the restoration of democracy were on the peak, Ashgar Khan felt to join the politics. On 13<sup>th</sup> March 1969 made his own political party with name of Justice Party. This was not a rightist or leftist party but the main goal of the party was the establishment of Islamic and an economically equal system. He struggled for the popularity of his party and visited all major cities of the country and established his party's offices. In late 1969 with other three parties it also became a part of Pakistan Jamhuri Party.

### **Tehreek-i- Isteklal**

After the amalgamation Asghar Khan's Justice Party with the Jamhoori Party, he again made another political party with name of Tehreek-i- Isteklal in 1970. For the struggle of political goals he arranged a wide political campaign in all over the country but in 1970 election he lost his election from a PPP candidate(Mehmood, 1988).

### **Election of 1970 and First Civilian Rule in the Country**

In 1969 Chief Martial Law Administrator Yaha Khan announced in his Legal Framework Order (LFO) that soon party based national election will be conducted in Dec 1970 and the political powers will be transferred to the elected authority. The one unit system in West Pakistan was phased out and BD system was discontinued. This was the first election based on political parties and adult franchise. This was a population based election held for the first time in the country which meant that 54% seats will go to East and 46% seats to West Pakistan (Javed, 2017).

### **Contest between PPP and Awami League**

This election result was totally against the state projection, contest of two majority political parties have turned this election into a referendum. From the East Wing Awami League a sole representative party under the Mujib-ur-Rehman and other prominent politicians highlighted their deprivation and inequality and in the West Pakistan PPP's leader Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto presented his Islamic socialism against the Ayub Khan's unequal economic system and targeted the feudal system. Elections were held in Dec 1970 in the result Awami League won the elections but its entire vote from the East wing similarly PPP got second position and secured majority seats from the West wing. Although Awami League was the winner in the 1970 election but PPP did not accept its rule.

### **Muslim League and its Factions**

In 1970 election Muslim League was divided into three main Factions, Muslim League (Qayyum group) Council Muslim League (which was a combination of different parties to counter Ayub Khan) Convention Muslim League (Ayub Khan's Party). These all factions were doing election campaign from national platform and wanted to initiate the Jinnah reforms in the country. ML Qayyum group got nine seats out of 132, these all from NWFP. Qayyum group remained in the cabinet by joining hands with the PPP government. So this was the popular party till PPP rule due to its leader Khan Abdul Qayyum Khan (Shaista Taj, 2015).

### **Muslim League (Pirpagara group)**

Council Muslim League group which emerged as against Ayub's dictatorship and Convention Muslim League (Ayub's Party), but in the 1970 elections Council Muslim League was dissolved by its members and Convention Muslim League was badly defeated. These two factions joined hands in 1972 against as opposition party against PPP and Pirpagara was nominated as its leader and was called Muslim League Pirpagara group.

### **Religious Political Parties in the 1970 Election**

All religious parties were also very active in the 1970's election, because these all parties had got the popular support in the military regime by the slogan of Islamic rule (*Allah ke zameen pa Allah ka Qanoon*) in these Parties jammat-i-Islami, Jamiat-i- Ulama-e-Islam, Jamiat-i- Ulama-e- Pakistan were very prominent. These all parties were using religious platform and promising for the implementation of Islamic principles in the country. Jamiat-i-Ulama-e-Islam had strong poll in NWFP and Baluchistan (Abbas, 2005).

### **National Awami Party and other Local Political Parties**

National Awami Party was also very active in NWFP and Baluchistan under the leadership of Abdul Wali Khan. Sindh National Party, Sindh Qaumi Mahaz and many local parties were also participated in 1970's

election. National Awami Party with the coalition of Jamiat-i-Ulama-e-Islam formed government in NWFP and Baluchistan(Mehmood, 1988). In the PPP ruling era NAP's coalition government in Baluchistan was dismissed by the central government and many of its members were arrested. After the assassination of a PPP leader in Peshawar blast in 1975 NAP was banned by the Supreme Court. In then in Zia Martial Law members of NAP were released from the jail (Burki, 1988).

### **Election Result of 1970 and Rule of PPP**

In the 1970 election 24 political parties took part but two parties Awami League and PPP got majority in the election. Awami League secured 160 seats out of 162 from the East Pakistan and none from the West Pakistan, likewise PPP secured 81 seats from West Pakistan which was majority representation and none from the East Pakistan. Total turnout of the election was 63%, Awami League got 40% of the popular vote while PPP got 19% of the popular vote(Burki, 1988). Despite the majority votes of Awami League was not allowed to make central government. PPP and Yaha Khan was playing delaying tactics in the formation of new assemblies and then famous slogan of Bhutto, *Idher hum, Udher tum* ( we rule here, you rule there) led to the unrest situation in East Pakistan, and due to lack of trust and external conspiracies, East Pakistan became a separate state on 16<sup>th</sup> Dec1970. On20<sup>th</sup> Dec 1971 Bhutto made a coalition central government with the Muslim League Qayyum group and framed the constitution of 1973. He focused on the issues of laborers, farmers, and socialist economic policies. PPP completed it 5 years rule after the East wing separation and new election was announced by ECP in 1977(Khan, 2005).

### **Election of 1977 and Alliance of Political Parties**

PPP after completing its five year of democratic rule the new elections were arranged before the original schedule, PPP gave most of his party tickets to the feudal lords and influential persons. The election campaign was started by the slogan of economic socialism.

### **Pakistan National Alliance in 1977**

In 1977 election nine political parties made a grand alliance under the name of Pakistan National Alliance (PNA), all the religious and National Awami Party was the major parties in this alliance. Abdul Wali Khan leader of NAP was the leading figure. Six were the original parties of this PNA, which were National Democratic Party (NDP), Jamiat-i-Ulama-e-Islam, Jamiat-i-Ulama-e-Pakistan, Jammat-i-Islami, Muslim League (Pirpagara group) Pakistan Democratic Party, and three other Parties which joined PNA were Tehrik-i-Isteklal by Asghar Khan first founder of the Justice Party, Khaksar Tehreek by Ashraf Khan and Sardar Qayyum Muslim Conference. In the election campaign instead of giving their own agenda and manifesto PNA focused and highlighted all the misdeeds of PPP, its disastrous economic policies, mismanagement of the economy, heavy expenditure of the administration and distrust of the people. PNA exploited the anti-Bhutto sentiment in 1977's election. The PNA declared Quran as their manifesto by including the religious touch they also gained a huge support of the people(Rehman, 2017).

### **Election's Result and Reaction of the Political Parties**

Elections were held on 7<sup>th</sup> March 1977 but the result was unpredictable for all political parties of Pakistan. In the election result PPP got 155 seats out of 200 total seats and PNA just secured 36 seats from all over Pakistan. From Punjab's provincial assembly PNA just got 8 seats out of 116 and from Lahore and Rawalpindi did not secure its seats.PNA did not accept and boycotted this result because PNA was



defeated in the election by using all means of rigging. So they started protest against Bhutto in all over the country. The situation got worse and police was helpless. The Army arrested many leaders of opposition, imposed curfew and section 144 in major cities by taking control but the situation was out of control. Then Bhutto was forced to impose the Military rule on 7<sup>th</sup> July 1977 martial was imposed in the country and Zia ul Haq became the CMLA and Pakistan again went into the hands of a long military rule(Mazari, 1999)(Burki, 1988).

## Conclusion

The main goal of this paper is to analyze the evolution of the political parties in Pakistan from 1947 till 1977. The period from 1947 to 1977 was very pivotal in shaping the country political landscape and political structure of the country. This evolution was marked by the emergence of many political parties and factions which reflected the diverse aspirations and challenges to the new born nation. This research paper illustrated that due to the internal grudges and personality clashes how the dominant and major political party gave way to a more fragmented political society. The imposition of the military rule and frequently political upheaval underscored the fragility of democratic institutions and democratic culture and political instability in the Pakistan. In nutshell the evolution of political parties in Pakistan from 1947-1977 reflects a complex interplay of different historical social and political factors that continue to influence the political discourse of the country. Understating of this initial period is very necessary for the comprehension of the current political landscape of the country. This research not only contributes to the historical narratives of Pakistan but also offer insights into the current struggles for democracy and development of political culture in the state.

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